

GUIDE TO Birdlife



in the Ports of ALGECIRAS BAY and TARIFA

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Greetings from the President

The Algeciras Bay Port Authority (“Autoridad Portuaria de la Bahía de Algeciras” - “APBA” - in Spanish) aims to constantly develop its activity in a balanced and sustainable manner. To achieve this objective, it is not enough to simply prioritize ensuring the effective execution of its powers and activities. It must also consider this priority through the eyes of its fellow citizens, with utmost respect for the cultural and natural heritage of the area. Only through this perspective can the viability of populations of wild fauna and native vegetation, among others aspects, in environments such as the port facilities be guaranteed. For this reason, the Port Authority promotes a corporate sustainability strategy incorporating an inclusive and transversal environmental approach that allows it to continue with its sustainable development.

The areas managed by the Port Authority, in addition to constituting an important base of activity that fuels economic and social development in the surrounding area, are extremely important in the green



system of the metropolitan areas of Algeciras, Tarifa, Los Barrios, San Roque and La Línea de la Concepción, due to their physical size and location, as well as their ecological values and social function, which, as mentioned previously, are enhanced through a strategic and inclusive corporate sustainability management approach.

In this sense, APBA has prepared this “Guide to Birdlife in the Algeciras Bay Algeciras and Tarifa Ports”, which is the result of work carried out under the technical supervision of the Sustainability Department of APBA’s Sustainable Development Division, with the collaboration of the technical team at APBA’s Environmental Control Office.

This guide is aimed precisely at citizens, members and users of the port community, in the hope that it will help them to better understand the diversity and value of the birds that can be found in the port areas, since they are, after all, an intrinsic part of the natural and landscape heritage of our environment.

Gerardo Landaluce
President of the Algeciras Bay Port Authority



02 Foreword

The Algeciras Bay Port Authority bases its commitment to sustainable port development on its “Green Strategy”, focusing its lines of action on the fulfilment of each of the sustainability commitments (SCs) within this strategic framework, as well as in its Code of Ethics. To this end, it has carried out a materiality analysis, based on the sustainable development goals and commitments established by the most influential organisations, at an international level, in the port sector. The needs and expectations of stakeholders have also been taken into account, as well as the main sustainability challenges faced by the port sector in general.

For all these reasons, APBA focuses its efforts on implementing this policy within the framework of a corporate sustainability strategy, applying the following principles in its management:

- Promote the growth of port activity linked to the operation of the Algeciras Bay and Tarifa Ports, based on the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, economic and social), thus promoting sustainable development.
- Comply with the sustainability commitments established in its Green Strategy in alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda, its adhesion to the 2030 Agenda of the World Network of Port Cities (AIVP), which incorporates the fulfilment of ten commitments to sustainable port development, of the principles contained in the “ESPO (European Sea Ports Organisation) Green Guide; Towards excellence in port environmental management and sustainability”, and of those included in the “Guideline to implement the objectives of the European Green Deal related to Ports”, thus improving its position in port sustainability.
- Respect environmental legislation, and any other requirement that it subscribes to that brings it closer to its aspirations in terms of sustainability and try to go beyond legal requirements, when this is technically and economically possible.
- Incorporate in its planning the needs and expectations of the interested parties and establish effective communication mechanisms with them in relation to environmental issues, reporting on their environmental performance, in alignment with their SCs and the UN 2030 Agenda, based on the principle of transparency with the annual dissemination and publication of Environmental Declarations, Sustainability Reports, etc.
- Carry out the appropriate studies and diagnoses to analyse environmental risks, in order to identify adverse aspects or threats, enhance beneficial impacts or opportunities, and control significant port environmental aspects.
- Protect biodiversity, preventing pollution within the scope of its activities and actively collaborating with the authorities with direct powers in matters of environmental control of activities carried out by external companies that operate in the ports it manages.
- Make rational use of natural resources, applying energy efficiency criteria and preventing climate change.
- Promote collaborative activities with public and private institutions in their area of influence that promote environmental, social and economic awareness of the Campo de Gibraltar region.
- Develop actions to share the principles of this Policy, as well as its Green Strategy, with the port community, to the extent permitted by its powers.
- Continuously improve the different aspects of its Environmental Management System and its environmental sustainability performance, through environmental objectives established wi-



thin the framework of the principles of this Policy, the result of its evolution being integrated into decision-making.

- Guarantee the availability of the necessary resources for the implementation of this Environmental Sustainability Policy and that it is pertinent and appropriate for this public body at all times.

This guide is the result of the application of the principle of “Developing actions to engage the port community in the implementation of the principles of this Policy, as well as its Green Strategy, to the extent permitted by its mandate”, although it is perfectly aligned, partially or to a large extent, with some of the other related principles.

In general, and as already mentioned in the introduction, this guide is intended for all types of readers, but mainly persons of any age who wish to start learning something about the natural heritage present in the port areas managed by APBA and, in particular, the birdlife that is present, to a greater or lesser extent, as a key element of the aforementioned heritage.

It is a basic but very useful manual to complement short bird watching routes and walks in the area, but above all to show readers the immense value of this small area in the southernmost corner of Cádiz and Andalusia due to the presence of many of the species mentioned in the guide.



Introduction 03

The coastline between the municipalities of La Línea and Tarifa is notable for its key geographical location, making it extremely important from a territorial standpoint, supporting a network of flows and connections between two continents – Europe and Africa – and between two bodies of water – the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The natural wealth that this coastal area harbours is due precisely to this privileged location, which has blessed it with the natural characteristics typical of a transition zone, as revealed by its flora and fauna, naturally playing a key role in the migratory processes of thousands of birds.

Moreover, the historical chronology of the area, from a geological perspective, reflects the existence of various episodes of biological isolation and therefore speciation that have resulted in the appearance of a large number of endemisms together with Ibero-Mauritanian and Mediterranean elements, especially at botanical level. Among the ecosystems present in the area, the largest are

the sub-coastal terraces, which are sandbanks permanently submerged in less than 20 cm of water. These represent a habitat of great environmental interest due to the presence of a large number of species of bivalves, gastropods and echinoderms that represent a perpetual source of food for numerous birds.



Photo: Strait of Gibraltar. Image taken from “Isla de las Palomas” (Pigeon Island), Tarifa.



Photo: Submerged sandbanks. Rinconillo Beach, Algeciras.



The slopes of hillside and mountain areas are covered by a layer of vegetation comprising oak trees (mainly cork oaks) and wild olive trees, which have been replaced in many areas by scrubs, while other areas have been repopulated with pines and eucalyptus trees. Despite human influence, specimens of wild laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) have been conserved.

Getares Cove and “Punta Carnero” are ensconced within the geomorphological unit known as “Cerros del Estrecho”. This is one of the best-preserved spaces in Algeciras Bay, boasting more and better developed vegetation, formed by cork oaks and wild olive trees that rise up before the cliffs, where more specific plant communities are found, including *Crithmum maritimum*, *Calendula suffruticosa* and *Asteriscus ma-*



[Photo caption] Scrub area comprising mainly Mediterranean dwarf palm and wild olive trees. In the background, a mountain area populated by cork oaks. Punta San García, Algeciras.



Photo: Getares Cove and “Punta Carnero”.

ritimus. The main plant communities on the beaches correspond to coastal vegetation typically found in this area, with species such as *Ononis variegata*, *Linaria pedunculata* and *Pseudorlaya pumila*.

The riparian ecosystems associated with the coast are also of great importance, notably the mouth of the Palmones river due to its salt flats, dunes and coastal sandbanks. These areas are home to plant species adapted to high salinity as they are partially submerged in brackish waters, as well as therophytes, which have adapted to living in areas with scarce presence of water. The plant communities are made up practically exclusively of *Spartina maritima*, *Zostera noltii*, *Sarcocornia perennis* and *Juncus maritimus*. This area provides food and shelter for bird communities, with more than 200 registered species of re-



Photo: Dune ridge, Rinconcillo Beach.



sident and migratory birds. Naturally, all this biodiversity is protected by various protection mechanisms. As a result, the stretch of coast and inland areas from “Punta Carnero” to “Punta de Getares” and the area corresponding to “Punta de San García” have been included in El Estrecho Natural Park (“Parque Natural del Estrecho” in Spanish). This natural park also protects one mile of coastal waters from the tip of San García to “Punta Carnero”.

Further north, the tidal marshes at the mouth of the Palmones River are protected as part of the natural park protection scheme, encompassing nine (9) habitats of Community interest. This natural park covers an area of 113 ha and includes not only the marshes but also the primary dune ridge and the floodplains.

As mentioned previously, this peculiar ecosystem is a resting and nesting place for many birds, prompting its declaration as a Special Protection Area for Birds (“Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves” - “ZEPA” - in Spanish) and a Special Conservation Area (“Zona de Especial Conservación” - “ZEC” - in Spanish), then becoming part of the Natura 2000 Network. Opposite the mouth of the Palmones River is the Site of Community Importance known as the Palmones river seabed and marshes (“Fondos Marinos y Marismas del río Palmones” – in Spanish), which covers a surface area of 88 hectares that complement the natural area. It is the breeding place of several fish species and home to the only colony of *Posidonia oceanica* in the bay.

In short, the port areas managed by APBA are located, as described previously, in a well-preserved natural area where a rich variety of different ecosystems converge, from cork oak forests and areas of Mediterranean shrubland to river mouths, marshes and dune ridges. These areas, some with high levels of biological productivity, such as the tidal marshes, provide sufficient shelter and a food for numerous and varied communities of different bird species, many of which make more or less permanent use of the port areas, which often serve as areas to rest, find shelter and even breed.



Photo: Mouth of the Palmones River.



The aim of this guide, the result of field work and observations over a period of more than two years carried out by technical staff specialized in this field, has been to compile a list of the most common birds that can be seen relatively easily in the port area described. However, it also includes species that have been spotted less frequently during their dispersal or migration and even other species, limited, to the surprise of birders, to merely occasional or anecdotal sightings, but which ultimately highlight, together with the other species, the enormous value and important role of the port areas managed by APBA as a feeding and resting area for many birds.



04 Equipment, material and conditions for bird watching

It is important to remember that bird watching requires not only a certain amount of time but also a certain degree of mobility. This guide is specifically intended to assist bird watching from the urban area or its immediate surroundings, to allow users to take advantage of any walk or route through any of the spaces described specifically for this purpose.



Photo: Group of cormorants sighted from the Fishing Dock in the Port of Algeciras.

For this reason, it is extremely important to have good quality optical equipment. Binoculars and/or telescopes are normally used. Obviously, the use of one or the other will depend on the area, the type of bird-watching activity you intend to pursue and, above all, the expected distance of the birdwatcher from the bird. Binoculars tend to be more appropriate, especially bearing in mind how much weight you want to carry around during, for example, a stroll along “Paseo Marítimo de Ribera” (the Ribera seafront promenade). However, if you visit areas such as the Saladillo Fishing Dock or Isla de Tarifa (also known as “Isla de las Palomas” in Spanish [lit. “Pigeon Island”]), the best locations for watching seabirds, it is better to take a telescope as the birds are normally further away.



Photo: Example of binoculars used for watching birds from the Ribera seafront promenade.

Binoculars should be light with 8X30 or 10X40 magnification. Normally it is advisable to avoid sudden movements and conspicuous clothing and to stay at a prudent distance from the birds, although it is true that the birds present in the port areas are very accustomed to coexisting with humans so that this aspect, with rare exceptions, is not a major concern. It is important to remember that, to use binoculars correctly, you must first locate the bird clearly with the naked eye and then without looking away from



the bird, bring the binoculars slowly but confidently to your eyes. Never try to look for the bird with binoculars. If you lose sight of it or it disappears from the field of vision, you should lower your binoculars, locate the bird again with the naked eye and then bring the binoculars back to your face again.

A telescope offers greater magnification but needs to be placed on a support, normally a tripod, although adapters can be used, for example for mounting on a car window. Ground-based telescopes normally have magnifications between 15x and 80x, allowing distant static objects to be observed in more detail. A telescope can even be used as a lens to take photographs. The major drawback of ground-based telescopes is that they are larger and need to be transported and a tripod if taken on routes by foot.

Finally, when preparing a day out bird watching, another very important resource is a field notebook. In principle, any small notebook format is fine for noting down anything that catches the watcher's eye. However, before starting to take notes on the appearance or behaviour of the sighted bird, it is essential to note down the date and place of the sighting. Then, and always with a view to later identification of the bird, note down different details, such as the following:

- **Size:** The most effective method for indicating the size of a bird in the field notebook is to use the size of known birds as a reference, thus allowing a reliable comparison to be made. Thus, for a small bird simply write that it is similar in size to a sparrow; if it is a medium-sized bird, write that it is similar in size to a dove; and, finally, for a large bird, write that is similar in size to an eagle. **For example:** *bird similar in size to a dove.*
- **Proportions:** This involves writing or indicating the size of a specific part of a bird's body compared to the rest. In other words, aspects such as long or short beak/bill, large, small, proportioned head, long or short legs, wings, tail, etc. Of course, the shape of the beak/bill or wings are also very useful characteristics. **For example:** *Proportionate head, short legs, straight and medium beak/bill, short tail.*
- **Colouration:** The general colour of the bird and, of course, the colouration of certain parts of its body are key aspects that will enable a more accurate identification. **For example:** *Generally white with greyish back and wings, dark brown head. Intense red legs and bill.*

After describing these aspects, notes can be taken on other aspects that, if not as crucial as those indicated above, certainly provide information that can sometimes help to distinguish species. For example:

- **Habitat:** In general, many of the birds identified in this guide can be seen in very different environments. However, although it is never advisable to take anything for granted in this regard



Photo: Telescope and tripod for bird watching from the inner breakwater at the El Saladillo dock.



since nature has a habit of surprising us, it is true that the habitat allows us to substantially reduce the list of possibilities by eliminating a certain number of birds that, very rarely or never, frequent the area. For example, it is very difficult to see partridges in the Campamento area. **For example:** *Spotted on ledges along the Ribera seafront promenade and flying over the fishing dock in search of food.*

- **Season:** This can help the birdwatcher to rule out a large number of species that may not be present during a specific period. Thus, you will see birds that can be observed only in either spring and summer (summer visitors) or autumn and winter (wintering birds) and even many others that only pass through during migration. **For example:** *Observed in spring.*
- **Singing:** This is difficult to describe in writing, especially for people who have little or no experience of birdwatching. However, after successive trips to the same places, you will become increasingly familiar with this aspect and find it easy to associate singing with each species, especially the most common or frequent ones.

Following the descriptive list in the example and taking into account the key aspects, such as the dark colouration of the head of a medium-sized bird spotted in the port of Algeciras in spring, while it was looking for food in the fishing dock, it is easy to conclude that the bird in question is or could be a black-headed gull.

Performing this short but important descriptive exercise, coupled with the use of this guide, will make it easier to identify the bird afterwards, if you were unable to identify the bird when you spotted it. A field notebook is also useful for keeping a record of sightings that you can check at a later date.



05

Birdwatching routes and viewing points for users

The strategic location of this area is highlighted throughout this guide, since it serves as a bridge for birds moving between the continents of Europe and Africa and between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, in addition to sedentary species, a high flow of migratory species can also be observed.

However, the areas managed by the Algeciras Bay Port Authority include several areas or specific points that are more conducive to bird watching. These areas are not only indicated as good locations for birdwatching, but also to describe the conditions for accessing each area, since access to certain port facilities tends to be restricted depending on the activity performed in each place. However, APBA aims to promote and raise awareness among citizens about the different of areas in the port where bird watching is evidently permitted and safe.

In this sense, **four** areas can be highlighted:

Ribera seafront promenade, Llano Amarillo

The area is located in the city of Algeciras. It includes the entire promenade located in front of the Algeciras fishing dock. This area is completely open to the public. It is ideal for watching seabirds at any time of the year. Of course, yellow-legged gulls abound, although it is relatively easy to spot black-headed gulls, cormorants, little terns, grey herons and even razor-bills, among other species. As in any of the areas managed by APBA, it is possible to see migrating species, especially during



Photo: Common sandpiper spotted from the Ribera seafront promenade at the northern breakwater of Llano Amarillo.

the post-nuptial period when you can see birds of prey, such as black kites, European honey buzzards or short-toed snake eagles flying over any of these places, waiting for the right conditions to cross the Strait.

Campamento port facilities in San Roque

The Campamento port facilities are mainly used for specific temporary projects, as well as to carry out ship repairs. So the level of activity in these facilities is not always the same. As a result, this lar-



ge open space, rich in largely ruderal vegetation, is relatively quiet. So much so that several species can be seen in the area, notably small passerines, including Sardinian warblers, European stonechats, European goldfinches, chifchaffs, wild buntings, white wagtails or black redstarts.

It is also worth highlighting the continual presence of a large group of grey herons that come to the area to feed, as well as stilts, little plovers and mallards. However, two of the most noteworthy species that can be spotted in this area are ospreys and stone curlews. Public access to this area is restricted by APBA.



Photo: Male goldfinch photographed at the Campamento facilities, San Roque.

“Isla de las Palomas” (Pigeon Island)

This is the southernmost point of the Iberian Peninsula and continental Europe. Today, the Island is connected to the town of Tarifa by road along a causeway. For years the area was used strictly for military purposes, until 2003 when the area was included in El Estrecho Natural Park. Access to the island is restricted to guided tours.



Photo: Black kite seen from “Isla de las Palomas”, Tarifa.

Since 2003, a colony of yellow-legged gulls has settled in the area, currently occupying the entire area, making the presence of other bird species in the land area practically impossible. However, the coastal strip is the ideal place for watching numerous seabirds, since, by avoiding flying over the mainland, all those birds that breed or spend the winter in the Mediterranean Sea and leave it at some point in their life cycle, have to do so using the only natural connection between both bodies of water: the Strait of



Gibraltar. During these movements, the birds come close enough to the coast to be seen. These include species such as Politico's, Balearic and sooty shear waters, razor billed auk, petrels and the northern gannet. In the rocky area, it is also possible to see waders such as turnstone, little ringed plovers, timbrels and some herons like the little egret. Obviously, the migratory season is a good time to spot many black kites, short-toed eagles and honey buzzards, among other species, as well as trans-Saharan passerines.

Area of “Isla Verde Exterior”

Located in the port of Algeciras. It covers an area of 122 hectares and 2,575 meters of mooring lines. There is also a detached breakwater more than two kilometres long. This area is the location of the container terminal of the Algeciras Bay Port operated by Total Terminal International Algeciras and the hydrocarbon and other liquid bulk storage terminal of EVOS Terminal Algeciras.

Marine species observed in this area include yellow-legged and black-headed gulls, little terns, common cormorants, common and black-legged terns, oyster-catchers, and razorbills. In the open esplanade areas, which are used less, passerine species have been sighted such as the wheat ear, black redstart or stonechat, and even birds of prey such as the common kestrel and osprey.

Public access to this area is restricted by APBA.



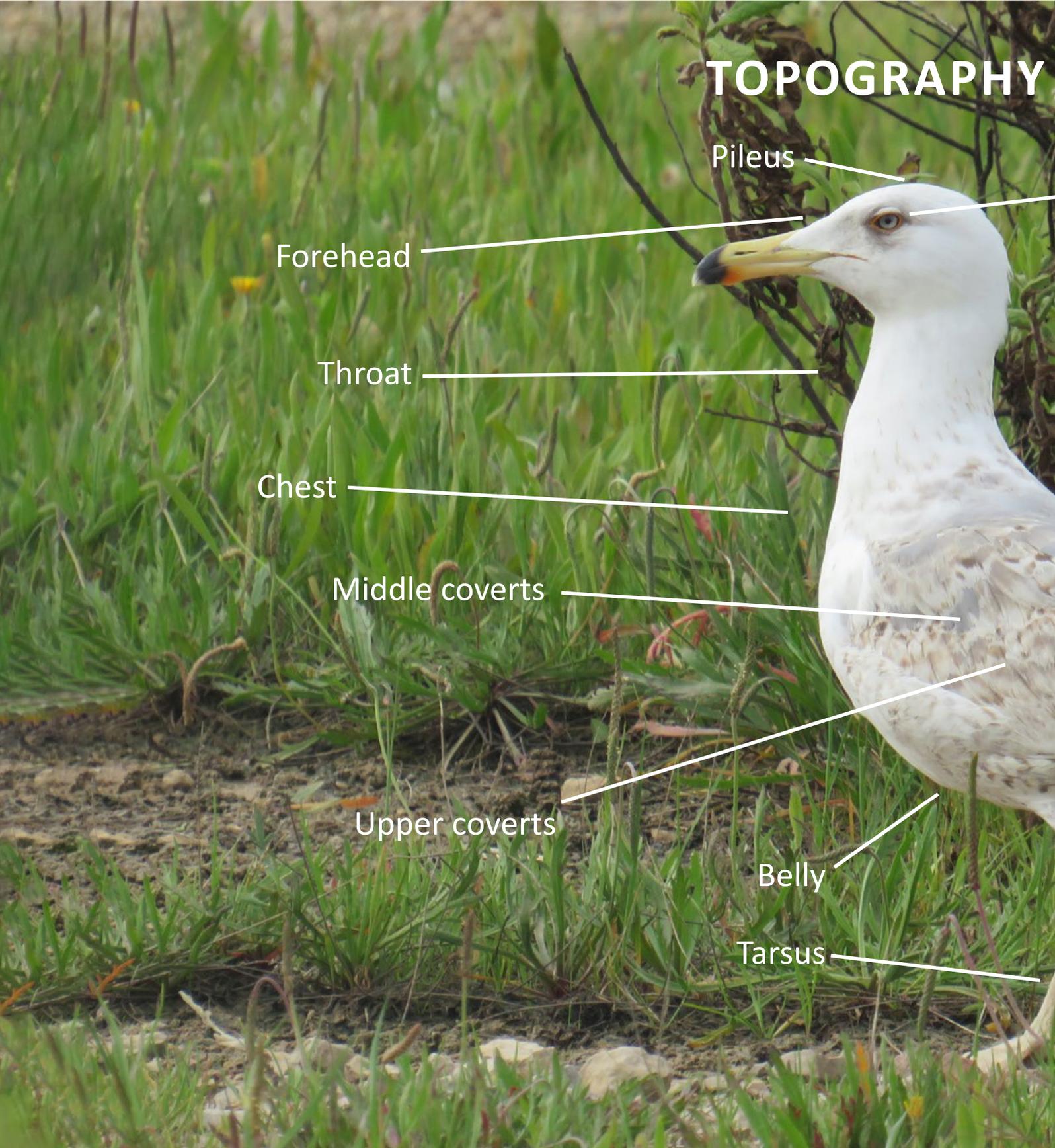
Photo: Great cormorant sighted at the East Pier, “Isla Verde Exterior” (Algeciras).



06

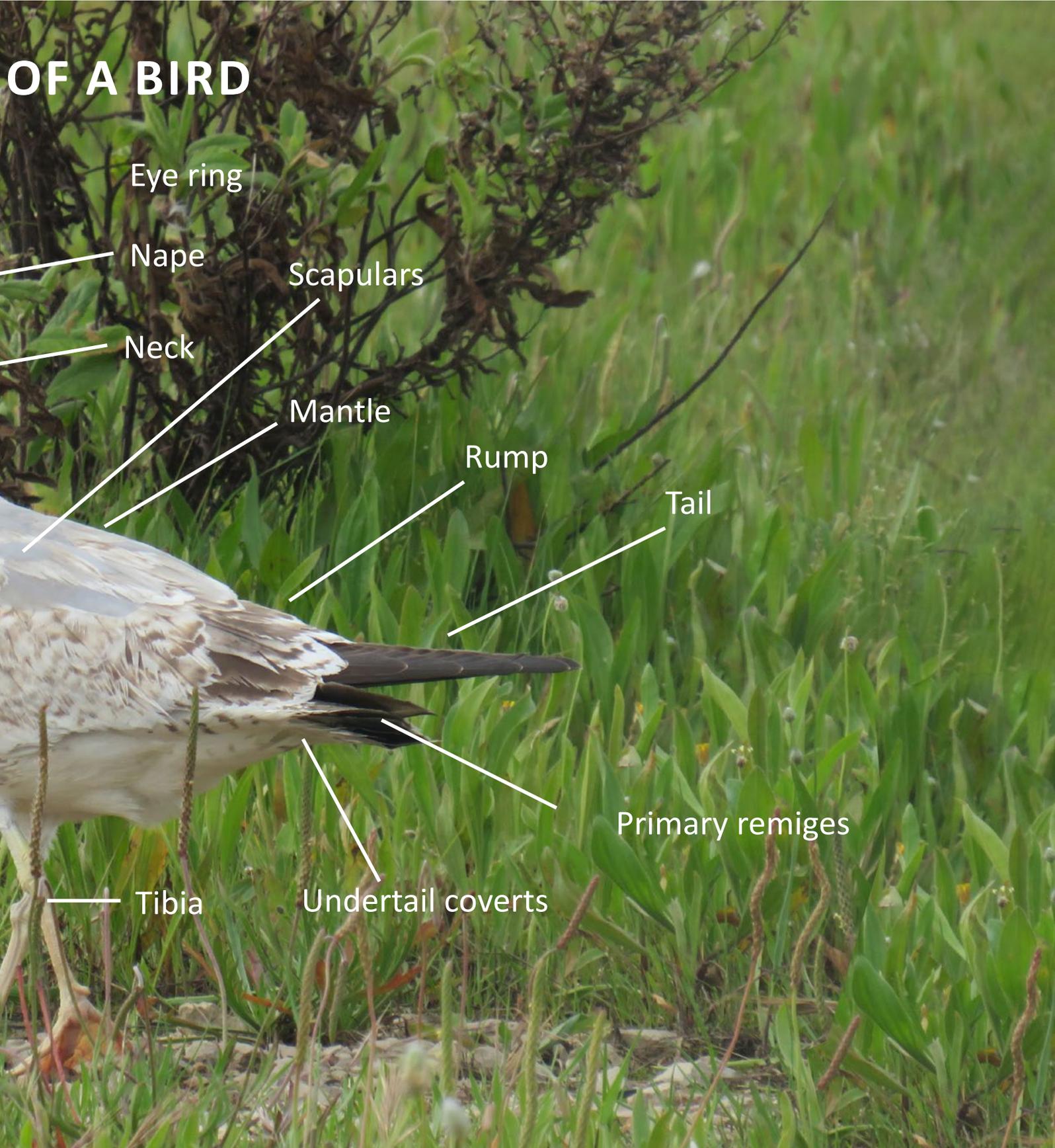
Topography of a bird

The fact sheets for each bird listed in this guide include specific terms used to name the different parts of the bird's body.





Knowledge of this terminology is essential when using this and other guides to identify birds. The following diagram is included for this purpose.



OF A BIRD

Eye ring

Nape

Neck

Scapulars

Mantle

Rump

Tail

Primary remiges

Tibia

Undertail coverts



Taxonomic orders 07

Knowledge of the orders in which species are taxonomically classified undoubtedly makes identifying the observed species easier and quicker. In this sense, the orders of the species included in this guide are presented below.

Podicipitiformes

This is an order of aquatic birds more commonly known as grebes. They often have crests or tufts and slender and elegant bodies. Some species boast striking colourations, especially during the breeding season, when they perform complex nuptial rituals. They spend most of their lives in the water, including to nest. Their feet are not fully webbed.

Phoenicopteriformes

An order of aquatic waters that includes modern-day flamingos and their extinct relatives. The order is made up of a single family, Phoenicopteridae, and three genera: Phoeniconaias, Phoenicoparrus, Phoenicopterus. In total, the order includes only six species of birds that are commonly known by the name of flamingos. Phoenicopteriformes are characterised, most notably, for having a body that is taller than it is long, a shortened trunk, and an elongated neck, as well as long legs. They have curved bills adapted for filtration. These are gregarious animals that gather in flocks made up of hundreds of specimens, nesting on the ground.

Pelecaniformes

This order includes mainly pelicans and cormorants. In total, it comprises five families and more than forty species. A distinctive characteristic of birds in this order are their four forward-pointing, webbed toes. These birds grow to a reasonable size, have well-developed wings, a long bill and rather short legs. They are aquatic birds and glide in a straight flight path. They extend their necks in flight, always close to the water.

Ciconiformes

The birds in this group are integrated in a single family and six genera. In total, 19 species have been identified. They are popularly known by the name of storks. They are reasonably tall birds with a long bill, legs, neck and wings.

Anseriformes

These birds are characterized by having wide, flattened bills, webbed forefeet, long necks and medium body height, and some species can even grow to a large size. There are different types of anseriformes in this order, which is, in turn, divided into three families, which include popular aquatic birds such as swans, geese or ducks. They live in fresh water habitats and also in areas near the coast.

Falconiformes

These are birds of prey with diurnal habits. They are very strong predators, excellent flyers, and have superior vision to other types of birds.



Gruiformes

This order of birds is fairly diversified and bears some similarity with the Ciconiformes order, although it differs from the latter in aspects related to the digestive and skeletal systems. They are mostly terrestrial birds that nest on the ground or in water areas. The order includes popular species such as cranes and herons.

Suliformes

Suliformes are an order of neognathous birds recognised by different taxonomic authorities. Different phylogenetic studies of mitochondrial and nuclear gene sequences have shown that some families traditionally included in the Pelecaniformes or Ciconiformes orders actually belong to a different group. This order includes gannets.

Procellariiformes

This is an order of pelagic birds (that feed in the open sea). It was previously called “Tubinares” and in English they are still called “tubenoses”, due to presence of ducts on their bills serving as olfactory nostrils and a tube for secreting excess salt ingested when eating, which is secreted by the supraorbital glands and expelled by means of a kind of forced “sneezing” or bill-shaking. This order includes shearwaters and petrels.

Charadriiformes

This is an order of birds with aquatic habits, and also includes wading species. Their distribution is relatively cosmopolitan, their preferred habitats include coastal areas, although some individuals prefer inland areas. Most of these birds are good flyers and many even good runners. The order comprises 19 families, 95 genera and around 383 species, the most well-known being gulls, plovers, stone-curlews or lapwings.

Columbiformes

This order includes pigeons and turtledoves. These birds live almost everywhere in the world, excluding the Arctic. Pigeons and doves are terrestrial birds. These birds are noteworthy for their beautiful plumage (soft and dense), the reverential courtship of the males and characteristic cooing sound. More than 300 species have been identified.

Strigiformes

These are nocturnal birds of prey. These birds have very rounded head with forward-facing eyes, some species have tufts of feathers on their heads called “ears”. They have short, strong, feathered legs, with powerful claws. They are characterised for their slow and silent flight.

Caprimulgiformes

This is an order of birds with nocturnal and crepuscular habits, noteworthy for their large and somewhat flattened heads, equally large eyes, rather short bills, which they can open wide and which are, in turn, normally surrounded by bristles. Their legs are not very developed, however, and their wings are as long as their tails. Their mimetic plumage has evolved to allow them blend in with the environment and thus defend themselves from their predators. They are usually barred brown to greyish in colour. They are commonly referred to as nightjars.



Apodiformes

This order is made up of a group of birds characterized by the presence of very short legs; the humerus is normally short and thick, practically preventing them from walking as other birds do. They have developed good flying skills. It is characteristic of some species to lower their body temperature during the night, as if they were going into torpor, in order to save energy. Well-known representative species in this order are swifts.

Coraciformes

This is an order of birds of varying shapes, although the group itself shares certain similar morphological features, such as an elongated bill, a certain shape of palate or the actual arrangement of the toes, which are generally webbed. Their colours are usually very eye-catching. The order includes some well-known birds such as the kingfisher or the bee-eater.

Bucerotiiformes

This is an order of birds that are distributed throughout the Old World. Their habits may be arboreal, although some species live in savannah and steppe regions. Some species are notable for the presence of a horny cap located on the upper part of the bill, other species have very unusual crests, such as the hoopoe.

Passeriformes

This order includes birds colloquially referred to as “songbirds”. It is a very extensive group that has managed to evolve very well thanks to their intelligence, forms of communication through singing or vocalisation and other noteworthy aspects such as the nests made by many passerines to guarantee their reproductive success, together with their attention to their offspring, since during the early stages of life their chicks are altricial and cannot survive without the help of their parents.

Their main characteristics include their small size, elongated sternum or different shaped bills, all depending on the eating habits of the bird. They also have distinctive four-toed feet, with three toes facing forward and one highly-developed toe facing backwards.

This is a cosmopolitan order, albeit more abundant in tropical geographic areas. It is made up of around 125 families and more than 5,000 species.



Using the guide 08

The aim of this guide is to enable users to distinguish the different species in the port areas managed by APBA, providing brief but precise details of their physical description, information on their behaviour and biology, keys for more accurate identification, and of course the identification of the specific areas or places within the port facilities where they are more likely to be seen. Of course, the guide includes information on each species' relationship with or normal use of the area where they have been observed.

All this information is accompanied by photographs to facilitate their identification. In general, the birds included in this first edition are described according to their usual appearance when they have been sighted in the area. For specific cases in which specimens have been seen with nuptial or winter colouration or immature plumage, among other characteristics, these features have been specifically indicated in the fact sheet for each species.

The species have been included following the taxonomic order. The guide includes graphic information on the main places from where all the birds identified on the fact sheets can be seen, provided you devote sufficient time. In addition to the watching routes and points, the guide also provides details of the conditions and ways of accessing those places, as well as information on the birds that can be seen most frequently. A time-line by months is also provided in which the months when the bird in question can be seen in the area are coloured in green.

Guide to Birdlife in the Ports of Algeciras Bay and Tarifa
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09.25 SANDERLING



Photo: Antonio Benítez Pita

Common name: Sanderling
Spanish vernacular name(s): Vernáculos
Scientific name: *Calidris alba*
Type of habitat: Coastal areas
Status: Wintering migratory bird



Photo: "Aerial view of San Roque" by P. Benítez Pita

WINGSPAN
40-45 cm.

HABITATS
Frequent bird during the winter that can be seen along the entire coast, especially on sandy beaches. It maintains a marginal presence in salt flats, lagoons and similar environments close to the coast, as well as inland waters.

BIOLOGY
It can be seen constantly running on the beaches following the waves washing up and down the shore, feeding on small invertebrates washed up by the waves. Maximum arrivals take place in the first half of April and second half of September. It lays one annual clutch, nesting on slightly elevated and open ground, often on bare rock. Each clutch contains three to four eggs.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?
This bird can normally be seen in coastal beach areas and related rocky intertidal zones. It can be seen frequently on "Isla de las Palomas".

LIFE IN THE PORT
This species maintains a frequent and visible presence, especially in winter, roaming and feeding mainly in the intertidal zone of "Isla de las Palomas".

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- Small wader with a rounded appearance and pale tones. In its winter plumage, when it is most often seen in the area, it has a grey back with a black shoulder and throat patch and very white underparts.
- Its short and straight beak is black in colour, like the legs. In flight it exhibits a wide white wing band with black border. The backs of juveniles are "spangled" black and white.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Pita

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Description of the birds

09

Below are the fact sheets for the birds seen in the port facilities managed by APBA during the field work carried out. As mentioned in the previous section, the fact sheets provide basic data on the usual appearance of the bird in the area, as well as its behaviour and sighting opportunities.

The sighted species have been included following the taxonomic order.





09.1 GREATER FLAMINGO



Source: APBA

Common name: Greater flamingo
Spanish vernacular name(s): Flamenco
Scientific name: *Phoenicopterus roseus*
Type of habitat: Lake and waterlogged environments
Status: Sedentary



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- The greater flamingo is the largest flamingo species, averaging 110-150 cm tall and weighing 2-4 kg. It is a clumsy-looking bird, generally with a pinkish-white plumage. It has very long legs and neck.
- The body, neck and head are whitish in colour with pink tones, while the primary and secondary flight feathers are crimson pink. The remiges are black.
- At rest, these black feathers are hidden under the coverts and long scapular feathers. The beak is curved towards the middle of its length almost at a right angle, is also pink, except at the tip, which is black. Juveniles are greyish-brown in colour, with no pink tones. Their legs are also much shorter.

**WINGSPAN**

140-170 cm.

HABITATS

Grey herons can be found in any aquatic habitat that can provide them with the food they need. They live in fresh, brackish or salty waters, as well as areas with stagnant or flowing water. They are frequently found in marshes, estuaries and lagoons, on the coast, salt flats and beaches.

BIOLOGY

The species reproduces in breeding colonies of hundreds or thousands of pairs. To breed, they need to find wetlands with shallow waters, generally with a constant level of water throughout the entire reproductive period, and with islands or emergent land areas safe from predators. The breeding season usually begins in April.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be seen mainly in lake environments. It feeds in shallow water lakes, sometimes in flocks of more than one million individuals. It can also be seen in estuaries, marsh areas and salt pans.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is only occasionally present in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay, mainly being observed mainly in winter. It can be seen after episodes of heavy rain in pools at the Campamento port facilities. It has also been spotted on occasions in the “flying” at Punta de San García.



Photos: Juan Jose Villalba.



09.2 GREAT CORMORANT



Common name: Great cormorant
Spanish vernacular name(s): Cormorán
Scientific name: *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Type of habitat: Lake and waterlogged environments
Status: Migratory. Winter bird



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Large bird, clumsy in appearance and generally blackish in colour, except for the throat, which is whitish. It has a long, thick neck, a prominent grey beak, and black legs. At the base of the lower jaw is a bare area of yellow-orange feathers that almost reaches the eyes.
- The colour of the feathers on the back makes them look like scales. In flight, they intersperse brief glides with wingbeat sequences. During the reproductive period, in adults white spots appear on the head, flanks and upper part of the thighs, and their plumage is more lustrous. The young have pale-creamy lower parts.

**WINGSPAN**

130-160 cm.

HABITATS

They can be found in any aquatic habitat that can provide them with the food they need. They live in fresh, brackish or salty waters, as well as areas with stagnant or flowing water. They are frequently found in reservoirs, as well as rivers, estuaries and lagoons, on the coast, salt flats and beaches.

BIOLOGY

It reproduces in colonies. They are normally found on sheltered ledges on cliffs, either above water level or at a height of 90 metres or more. Their clutches normally contain between 3 and 5 eggs. Incubation is carried out by both parents and lasts for between 28 and 31 days.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

Grey herons can be seen mainly in coastal environments, although, as mentioned previously, sightings are becoming increasingly common in inland dammed areas.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay is seasonal. They can be seen mainly in winter. They can frequently be spotted on the many pontoons, quays and docks in the port facilities, as well as swimming, especially in the basin of the Algeciras fishing dock.





09.3 MALLARD



Common name: Mallard

Spanish vernacular name(s): Pato real

Scientific name: *Anas platyrhynchos*

Type of habitat: Lake environments and coastal areas

Status: Sedentary and wintering migratory



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- Medium-sized bird (approx. 60 cm). It is the most common anatid in the province. It exhibits marked sexual dimorphism. Males have a metallic green head and neck, a narrow white ring on the neck and a chestnut colour chest.
- The tail has short and curly feathers. Black anal area. Yellow bill with a small black spot on the tip and orange legs. Brown back, grey ventral area and white and black anal area. Females are inconspicuous, with mottled brown plumage. Both sexes have metallic violet-blue speculum feathers.

**WINGSPAN**

81-98 cm.

HABITATS

A generalist bird, common in all types of wetlands, marshes, lagoons, pools, park ponds and gardens, waterlogged meadows, reservoirs, ditches and rivers. It prefers areas with shallow waters.

BIOLOGY

Resident species throughout the year in the area, although there is a migratory wintering stock. Oestrus starts as from February. They nest out of water, among marsh vegetation. Annual clutches contain 7 to 13 eggs. Very varied diet, usually roots of aquatic plants, but also worms, molluscs, small fish and insects. Also seeds in grasslands out of water. It is a surface duck, which means it only submerges its head to search for food. For this reason, it prefers shallow water.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be seen in almost all bodies of fresh water that converge or flow into the sea. The mouth of the Palmones River and the adjacent marshes are ideal locations for watching these ducks.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species can be seen frequently in the port, being especially visible in winter, roaming and feeding, particularly in waterlogged areas. Several specimens have been seen in the Campamento port facilities after heavy episodes of rain.





09.4 RED KITE

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: Red kite
Spanish vernacular name(s): Milano real
Scientific name: *Milvus milvus*
Type of habitat: Forests and open areas
Status: Wintering migratory bird



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Medium-sized bird of prey (approx. 66 cm). Brown and reddish plumage, generally rusty in colour, with a long and deeply forked tail (juveniles have a less forked tail, lighter and more uniform colouring, with more brownish underparts). Pale grey head and neck furrowed by thin darker stripes.
- Extraordinarily agile in flight and a very characteristic elegant silhouette, with long wings slightly bent backwards at the tips (bent) and decorated with white patches that are very visible below.

**WINGSPAN**

165–170 cm.

HABITATS

Forest species with a preference for foothills or mid-mountain areas with large open areas that they use as hunting grounds. They have large feeding areas and therefore also use the countryside, crops and the areas around inhabited rural areas. They also appear in different types of forests, such as pine or eucalyptus forests, or small riverside thickets, chosen as their usual roosts.

BIOLOGY

Very prolonged migration, with few crossing the Strait, reaching maximum arrivals during the second half of March and first half of October, with frequent presence during these crossings. They nest in large trees at a considerable height (more than 10 meters) and lay annual clutches of 1 to 5 eggs incubated by the female. Generalist diet. As hunters, they are not very skilled, so they look for easy-to-capture prey, such as immature, sick or small animals. Common in landfills, dunghills and roads, where they usually take advantage of road-killed animals, due to their marked scavenging tendency.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen on its migratory journeys, mainly during the pre-nuptial period, in the areas of Campamento and Tarifa.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.5 OSPREY



Common name: Osprey

Spanish vernacular name(s): Águila pescadora

Scientific name: *Pandion haliaetus*

Type of habitat: Riparian, lack environments

Status: Sedentary



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- It is a raptor with dark brown upper parts, except for the head which is white with a dark mask across the eyes. The lower parts are whitish, with a black spot in the carpal area, and the wingtips are also black. The tail feathers and remiges have dark transverse bands and striae of variable intensity, or even entirely absent, on the chest. The eyes are yellow and the beak is very sharp with a grey-blue cere.
- A distinctive dark mask runs from the beak to the back across the eyes. The crown has dark-brown streaks of varying intensity. First-year juveniles have mottled plumage on the upperparts and orange eyes.

**WINGSPAN**

152-167 cm.

HABITATS

The osprey is closely associated with aquatic habitats with abundant prey and shallow, clear and unpolluted waters. Spanish breeders select marine habitats, with the birds nesting on quiet cliffs, building their nests on rocks. In northern Europe, they nest on trees, both live and dead, building their nests at the top, sometimes preferring electrical turrets instead. Migrants and winterers fish both in marine areas and in continental waters, such as lakes, rivers, reservoirs, swamps, estuaries, bays, marshes, lagoons, etc. During the winter, Mediterranean nesting adults also tend to fish in coastal lagoons and river mouths. Juveniles, during their dispersive migrations, may venture deep inland on the continents, using continental water resources more than 80 km away from the coast.

BIOLOGY

Specimens from northern Europe are trans-Saharan migrants. They spend the winter in tropical Africa, although more and more specimens winter in the Iberian Peninsula. During migration, passage through the Iberian Peninsula is frequent, although there are no concentrations as large as those of other raptors in the Strait of Gibraltar because they can migrate directly over the sea without depending on thermal currents. They feed exclusively on live fish that they catch in fresh, salty or brackish waters. The capture of other prey is exceptional and accidental. The smallest fish usually measure around 10 cm and the largest approximately 60 cm and weigh between 100 and 610 g. The most preyed-upon species are those that move near the surface. In the Mediterranean, the most consumed species belong to the Mugilidae family. During flight when preparing to catch fish, it cycles and hovers a short distance above the water. After locating its prey, it dives at it from the air at a sharp angle. At the last moment it advances its claws which are submerged in the water. It can also fish from perching sites.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

They can be watched in estuarine and coastal areas. Also in reservoirs and inland lakes. They can also be seen in the Algeciras port facilities throughout the year. There is at least one permanent pair in the Palmones River Marshes, extending its distribution area to practically the entire Bay.

LIFE IN THE PORT

As mentioned in the previous section, the presence of this species in the port facilities is constant and permanent throughout the year.





09.6 SHORT-TOED SNAKE EAGLE

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: Short-toed snake eagle
Spanish vernacular name(s): Águila culebrera
Scientific name: *Circaetus gallicus*
Type of habitat: Forest and agricultural areas
Status: Migratory

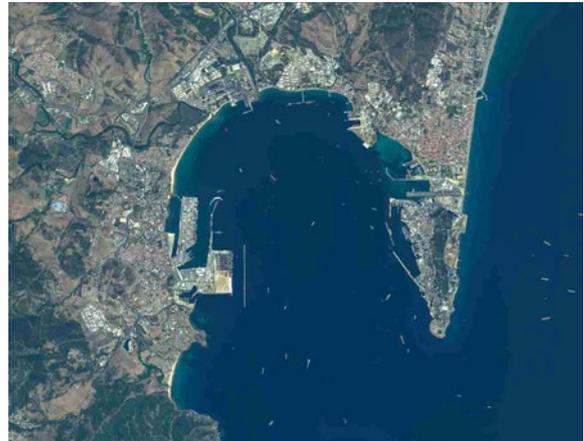


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Relatively large raptor. Wide and voluminous head, with a short but robust beak and large yellow forward-facing eyes. It has short tarsi with relatively small but robust toes, protected against snake bites by scales.
- The plumage of adult birds is mainly whitish, and variably barred or mottled in a brown colour. In contrast, the colouration may be more or less dark brown depending on the specimen, extending over the head, neck and chest of the bird.
- In flight it is possible to see the secondary bars and long tail, which has several bands, of which the end band is considerably wider. Despite its large size, it is capable of hovering for a long time over the same point to search for prey.

**WINGSPAN**

160-175 cm.

HABITATS

The short-toed snake eagle needs open and sunny countryside, with scattered trees or scrub.

BIOLOGY

A strictly migratory bird, it spends winters in savannah regions close to the equator. It leaves Europe in September and returns between March and April to breed. It is distributed throughout the Iberian Peninsula. A small number of individuals winter in the south of the peninsula.

During the mating season, the male makes its voice heard in the territory where it nests and performs repeated swooping flights. It normally nests in low trees, in treeless areas or on bushes growing in the cracks of steep rock walls.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

They can be seen mainly in forest and agricultural areas. However, during the migration season it is relatively easy to spot them flying over any site. They can also be seen in the Algeciras port facilities in September on their journey to the African continent.

LIFE IN THE PORT

As mentioned previously, the presence of this species in port facilities is limited to sporadic and anecdotal sightings made during the migratory period, especially in the post-nuptial period.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.7 GRIFFON VULTURE



Common name: Griffon vulture
Spanish vernacular name(s): Buitre, pajarraco, buitre franciscano
Scientific name: *Gyps fulvus*
Type of habitat: Rocky areas
Status: Sedentary



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island).

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- Glides in flight, has a short black tail and long, broad wings with open ends (wingtips ending in widely separated “fingers”). Plumage is generally greyish brown with a somewhat paler dorsal area and dark regime feathers, giving an almost black appearance to the rear end of the wings and brown-coloured ventral feathers with subtle lighter-toned stripes.
- It has a characteristic neck with a ruff of white or cream down (which is dark in juveniles) adorned with a ruff or collar of down feathers at its base of the same colour (white and cottony in adults and fringed with reddish cancellate feathers in juveniles). The beak is thick and powerful, bone-coloured in adults and black in juveniles. The iris is yellowish or amber in adults and black in juveniles. Legs with bare tarsi.

**WINGSPAN**

250 cm.

HABITATS

Closely associated with rock walls and cliffs, mountain areas and river canyons close to open areas with few trees or meadows with the presence of livestock. Due to its large feeding range, it can appear in many types of habitats.

BIOLOGY

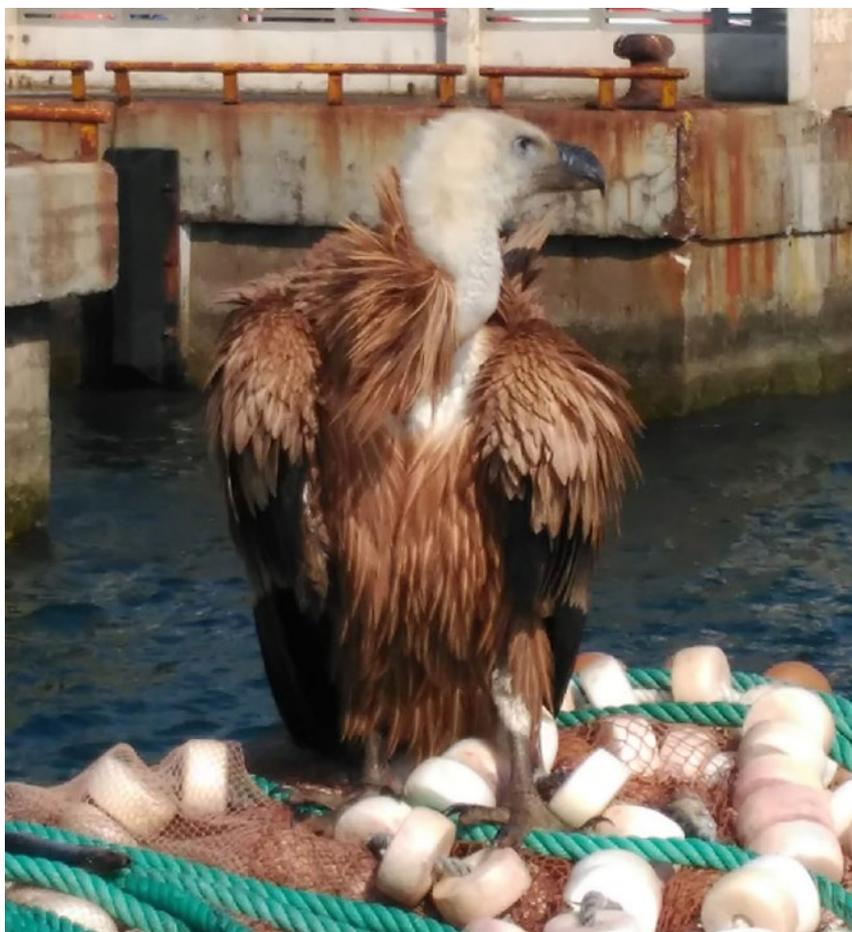
One of the largest and longest-living birds, it is endowed with excellent adaptations for detecting and consuming large carrion. Sedentary during juvenile dispersal, its autumn movements last from late August to early December, with maximum arrivals in the first half of November; in spring, from March to mid-June, with maximum arrivals take place in the first half of May. They reproduce in colonies formed by a large number of pairs (sometimes hundreds), building their nests in the abovementioned habitats with annual clutches of a single egg that is incubated by both parents.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

Very common throughout the countryside of Gibraltar, especially in forest areas and with the presence of livestock.

LIFE IN THE PORT

Its presence is not very common in the area, although it can occasionally be seen in large groups flying over port facilities, generally at high altitude. During the period between the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, vulture chicks leave their nests and begin a period of dispersal. The inexperience of these specimens when searching for food means that they can sometimes appear in the most unexpected places, usually with symptoms of weakness. In this sense, in recent years, at least two specimens have been sighted in the facilities of the port of Tarifa.



Source: APBA



09.8 BLACK KITE

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: Black kite
Spanish vernacular name(s): Milano negro
Scientific name: *Milvus migrans*
Type of habitat: Forest and agricultural areas
Status: Migratory

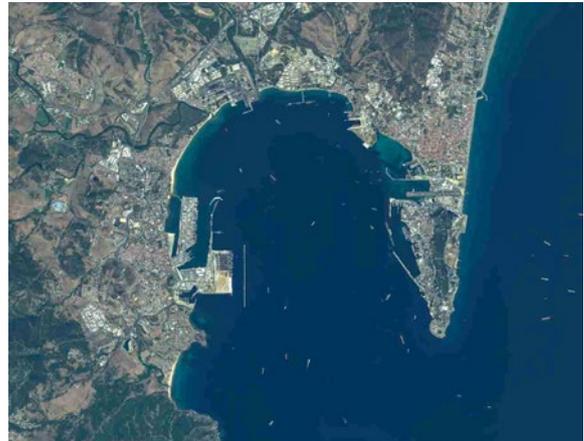


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Medium-sized dark-coloured bird of prey. It has long wings and a long, narrow and forked tail. Adults are very dark in colour, with a greyish head. The wing coverts have light-coloured edges. The tail is greyish-brown with abundant barring.
- The black kite is found in the temperate areas of the Palearctic, Africa and Australasia. European specimens display clear migratory behaviour.
- During migrations, tens of thousands of kites pass through the Strait of Gibraltar between Spain and Morocco, as well as along the eastern side of the Black Sea in the Middle East.

**WINGSPAN**

130-150 cm.

HABITATS

It occupies a great diversity of habitats, although it prefers more or less open areas, with grasslands, wastelands and mosaic landscapes, as well as river banks and wetlands.

BIOLOGY

It is an opportunistic and adaptable animal. With gregarious habits and a tendency to scavenge, the black kite is capable of exploiting various food sources, from explosions of insects or voles, roadkilled animals, dunghills, refuse dumps, farms and slaughterhouses.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

They can be seen mainly in forest and agricultural areas. notably in landfills and countryside areas and during both pre-nuptial and post-nuptial migration periods.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay is limited to migratory periods, especially during post-nuptial migration. They are usually seen flying over the area.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.9 COMMON KESTREL



Common name: Common kestrel
Spanish vernacular name(s): Cernícalo
Scientific name: *Falco tinnunculus*
Type of habitat: Forest and agricultural areas
Status: Sedentary



Photo: Port of Algeciras.

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- Small raptor compared to other birds of prey. It has long russet-coloured wings with black, wide and slightly pointed spots. It displays marked sexual dimorphism in terms of both size (females are larger) and plumage colouration.
- Adult males have a reddish back, with varying numbers of black spots, while the lower parts are mainly cream coloured. The head is greyish with a number of black streaks, with distinctive whitish cheeks and a dark moustache on the face. Females have more homogeneously brown tones, with the dorsal regions covered in many spots, and an ochre-coloured chest and belly. The moustache, although visible, is much less visible than in males.

**WINGSPAN**

70-80 cm.

HABITATS

Relatively easy to see during the day, as they like open countryside and areas of scrub, fields and pastures. They make their nests in crevices of rocks or buildings, old corvid nests, tree holes or directly on the ground. They actually nest on any terrain, even on sea cliffs. They can also be seen nesting in towns and cities.

BIOLOGY

Their diet is highly varied, ranging from small insects to small rodents and reptiles.

The common kestrel breeds in spring. Clutches normally contain between 3 and 6 eggs and incubation lasts approximately one month and corresponds mainly to the female. The male is in charge of bringing food. The young become independent one month after they are born; during those weeks, they spend much of their time learning how to search for prey.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

They can be seen mainly in forests and agricultural areas. However, they can frequently be sighted in urban centres.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is permanently present in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay. Specimens can be spotted flying over the Campamento port facilities, mainly in search of prey. Although some specimens have also been seen in the area of Isla Verde and “Isla de las Palomas”.





09.10 LESSER KESTREL

Photo: José María Rodríguez Nodal.



Common name: Lesser Kestrel
Spanish vernacular name(s): Primilla
Scientific name: *Falco naumanni*
Type of habitat: Forest and agricultural areas
Status: Migratory



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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- Very similar to the common kestrel, only smaller. It also presents certain morphological differences with respect to the common kestrel, such as the colour of its nails, which are white compared to black in the common kestrel, or the absence of a moustache, unlike the common kestrel which has a moustache. The adult male has a reddish back with no spots. The head and large coverts are blue-grey. The lower parts are soft cream in tone with pink hues and lightly speckled with dark spots.
- In flight it has a very pale appearance, both on the underparts of the wings and on the body and tail, which is light grey in colour with a black tip, and distinctive central tail feathers, which are longer. The female is much duller and more uniform overall in colour. Its upper parts are reddish brown, with abundant transverse barring.

**WINGSPAN**

66-72 cm.

HABITATS

Very present in open areas in general, especially areas of extensive crops, grasslands, and all types of steppe areas. It uses buildings, both isolated and in towns or cities, to establish its breeding colonies. In wintering regions, the species also chooses open areas.

BIOLOGY

Its diet consists of medium and large invertebrates, from Scolopendra specie to beetles, although grasshoppers, crickets and locusts make up the bulk of its diet. During the breeding season, the lesser kestrel establishes colonies. These colonies tend to roost in all types of constructions, from agricultural to large historical buildings. It lays its eggs in cracks and cavities. Clutches contain two to six eggs, normally laid at the end of April.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

They can be seen mainly in forests and agricultural areas. However, they can frequently be sighted in urban centres.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is permanently present in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay during the breeding season, especially in the Port of Tarifa. They are relatively easy to spot since there is a breeding colony in the Castle of Guzmán el Bueno, which is actually the southernmost breeding colony of lesser kestrels on the entire European continent.



Photo: José María Rodríguez Nodal.



09.11 EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: European honey buzzard
Spanish vernacular name(s): Halcón abejero
Scientific name: *Pernis apivorus*
Type of habitat: Forest
Status: Migratory

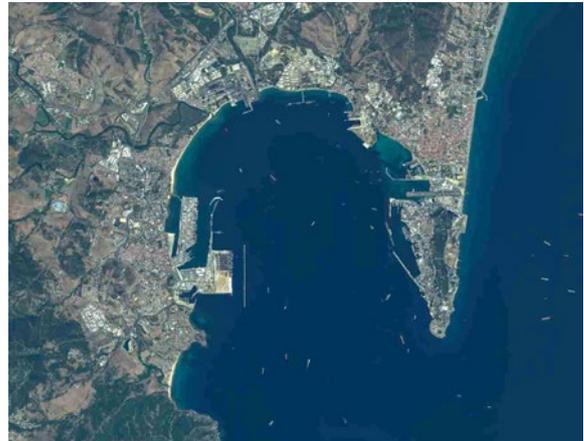


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Medium-sized bird of prey with considerable differences in colouration between individuals (up to 10 different plumage phases). In general, clear underparts with profuse transverse brownish barring and a brownish back, much darker than the ventral area.
- Elongated tail with a characteristic stripe (notable variations between individuals, from very light to extremely dark colouration, the most frequent being those of intermediate colouration).
- In flight, the most significant aspect that differentiates this species from other similar birds of prey, such as the common buzzard, is its silhouette, with distinctive pointed head, long tail with somewhat rounded angles and straight and narrow wings.

**WINGSPAN**

135-150 cm.

HABITATS

Forest species, associated particularly with deciduous forests (beech, oak, chestnut, birch) with wide clearings and boundary areas in the north of the peninsula. It can also be found in grasslands, bushes or crops, and, to a lesser extent, in coniferous and oak tree formations or river thickets. During migration it takes advantage of mid-mountain forest habitats that it finds on its journey.

BIOLOGY

A gregarious and abundant migrator, normally observed in flight and in large flocks, especially at high points near the coast. The Campo de Gibraltar region is a privileged place for spotting this raptor on its migratory passage across the Strait of Gibraltar (it follows the same routes year after year). This territorial species nests in the forks of branches of tall trees and lays 1 to 3 eggs annually, incubated by both parents, although the female dedicates more time to this task. It feeds on flying insects, especially wasps (larvae, pupae and imagos) and bumblebees, although it also consumes invertebrates and small vertebrates, and even fruits.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This species can be seen in flocks flying over port areas on its migratory passage, especially in the post-nuptial period, notably in the areas of the Port of Tarifa and surrounding areas, and occasionally in the area of Algeciras.

LIFE IN THE PORT

No presence of the species has been recorded as such since it has only been observed during migration periods flying over the port facilities, generally at high altitude.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.12 GREY HERON



Common name: Grey heron
Spanish vernacular name(s): Garza Real
Scientific name: *Ardea cinerea*
Type of habitat: Lake and waterlogged environments
Status: Sedentary

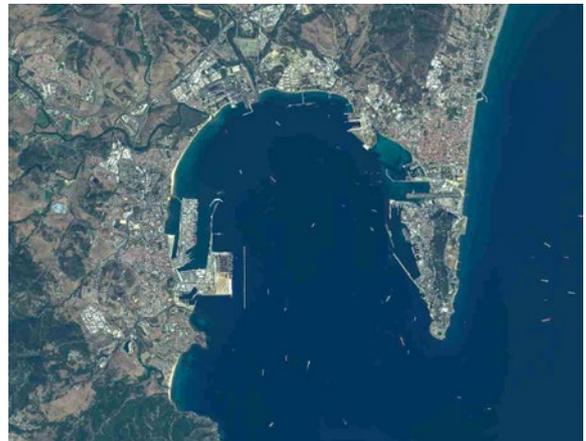


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- The grey heron is a large and very elegant bird with a long neck and greyish colouration.
- During the reproductive period, the head of adults acquires a white colour and is decorated with a black line and a pair of long feathers of the same colour, while the neck, also white, is longitudinally furrowed by two parallel blackish bands. It has a strong, long and sharp beak.

**WINGSPAN**

160-200 cm.

HABITATS

They can be found in any aquatic habitat that can provide them with the food they need. They live in fresh, brackish or salty waters, as well as areas with stagnant or flowing water. Although they are more common in lowland areas, they can also be found in mountain lakes, reservoirs, as well as rivers, estuaries and lagoons, and even on the coast and beaches.

BIOLOGY

It breeds in colonies, nesting in trees and/or reed beds. The rest of the time it is a solitary bird. It lays between 3 and 5 eggs in March. Chicks are born after 26 or 27 days and remain in the nest for 6 or 7 weeks.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be seen in areas near bodies of water.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is permanently present in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay. A group of around 8 individuals can frequently be seen feeding in a water pond located in the Campamento port facilities. However, they have also been observed in “Isla Verde Exterior”, the Fishing Dock of Algeciras Port and Saladillo.





09.13 LITTLE EGRET



Common name: Little egret
Spanish vernacular name(s): Garceta
Scientific name: *Egretta garceta*
Type of habitat: Coastal areas
Status: Sedentary



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This medium-sized heron is somewhere between the cattle egret (*Bulbucus ibis*) and the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*). Its plumage is always completely white and it has a long, dagger-shaped black beak and black legs.
- Its most distinctive feature are the yellow “socks” on its feet. During the breeding season, it exhibits a pair of striking long lanceolate feathers on the crown and long ornamental feathers on the chest. In flight it adopts the typical posture of a heron, with its neck bent and its legs protruding from behind its tail.

**WINGSPAN**

90-100 cm.

HABITATS

It can be considered the most coastal heron as it is frequently seen in rocky sections of the coast. It is also a common bird in a wide variety of aquatic environments, always in shallow and calm waters, such as marshes and lagoons with abundant arboreal and marsh vegetation and all types of wetlands, natural or artificial, such as reservoirs, salt flats, irrigation canals and, especially, rice fields.

BIOLOGY

It is a colonial species that nests in both bushes and trees (at varying heights) and among marsh vegetation. It lays one annual clutch of three to five eggs (sometimes up to eight), incubated by both parents. Its diet comprises small aquatic and terrestrial fish, amphibians and insects (both larvae and adults). To a lesser extent, it also consumes crustaceans, lizards, worms, snails, etc.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is normally seen in coastal areas with rocky coastlines and on the boundaries of the port facilities, notably on “Isla de las Palomas” (Pigeon Island) and the entire area of Los Ladrillos beach.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species is frequent, especially in winter; it can be seen in rocky areas, breakwaters and seawalls searching for food.





09.14 CATTLE EGRET



Common name: Cattle egret
Spanish vernacular name(s): Espurgabuey, garrapato
Scientific name: *Bubulcus ibis*
Type of habitat: Countryside areas
Status: Sedentary

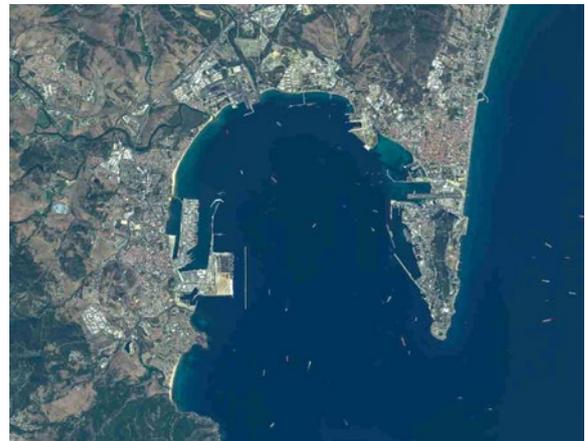


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This is a medium-sized heron. It has a relatively short neck, legs and beak and mostly white plumage. White is the dominant colour during the nuptial season, with tones between ochre and orange on the crown, nape of the neck, chest and back. The beak, eyes and legs have an intense reddish colour.
- Non-breeding specimens are much paler, with a light ochre-coloured crown, yellow beak and legs in a wide variety of colours. Juveniles are similar to non-breeding adults, but completely white.

**WINGSPAN**

82-95 cm.

HABITATS

It is the least aquatic species of the heron group, since it usually frequents grasslands with abundant livestock, pastures, fields and crops when looking for food, although it can also be frequently spotted in flooded areas and shallow lagoons and, in recent years, in landscaped garden areas of large cities.

BIOLOGY

It is a colonial species during the breeding season. It nests in trees (sometimes very far from bodies of water) or among marsh vegetation. Laying usually takes place between mid-May and the end of June. Clutches contain four or five white eggs (varying between three and nine), greenish or bluish in colour with a spot at one end.

It is a relatively opportunistic species with undemanding eating habits and adapted at all times to the resources available in the environment. During the breeding season, it preys mainly on grasshoppers and cicadas. It also feeds on beetles, flies, dragonflies and other invertebrates, as well as lizards, small snakes, amphibians and micro-mammals. It is common for egrets to visit landfills, attracted by the insects there. It is also common for them to stand behind tractor bars during ploughing operations, waiting for a multitude of small animals to be appear, and to use cows and sheep as watchtowers from which to dive at insects or small vertebrates moved as these animals walk.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can mainly be seen in countryside areas and large open spaces with the presence of livestock. However, as mentioned previously, they are common in wetlands and landscaped garden areas in large cities.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is permanently present in areas such as Campamento, but it has been spotted most frequently in the gardens located in front of the Port Authority building.





09.15 NORTHERN GANNET



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.

Common name: Northern gannet
Spanish vernacular name(s): Alcatraz
Scientific name: *Morus bassanus*
Type of habitat: Pelagic
Status: Wintering migratory bird



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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- An unmistakable seabird with a large wingspan (up to 180 cm), with long, narrow wings, a wedge-shaped tail, and a long, robust head and bill. It dives vertically from a great height to fish, entering the water at 100 km/h.
- Adults have completely white plumage with black only on the wingtips, and light yellow-orange coloured head and neck.

**WINGSPAN**

165-180 cm.

HABITATS

They spend most of their lives in the sea and can sometimes be seen resting in the water, exceptionally on land, where they only go to nest.

BIOLOGY

It nests in summer on the coasts of sub-polar regions in the North Atlantic, laying clutches containing one egg, which is incubated by both parents. Its diet is mainly carnivorous, although it can also capture molluscs and crustaceans.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in the port areas in contact with the sea with specific wave and wind conditions that allow it to catch its prey. The main areas are Campamento and Tarifa because they are more exposed and less sheltered.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species can be seen mainly in coastal areas and frequently on “Isla de las Palomas”, where there are strong easterly winds that bring it closer to the coast.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.16 SCOPOLI'S SHEARWATER

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: Scopoli's shearwater
Spanish vernacular name(s): Pardela
Scientific name: *Calonectris diomedea*
Type of habitat: Pelagic
Status: Migratory



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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- Medium-large seabird with a wingspan of approximately 115 cm. It is the largest of the shearwaters present in Europe. They have dark brown upper parts and white lower parts, except the outer edges of the wings, which are dark. They have a strong and robust pale-yellow beak with a dark tip.
- Their wings are arched slightly backwards and beat almost effortlessly during gliding flight, skimming very close to the water surface, accompanied by a characteristic rocking movement when gliding, which distinguishes them from other shearwaters.

**WINGSPAN**

115 cm.

HABITATS

Highly pelagic species that lives in the open sea but can sometimes be found in wide bays or near the coast, in capes and on islands, only venturing to the mainland during the breeding period.

BIOLOGY

Migratory species with maximum arrivals in February-March and maximum departures in October-November, with a significant flow of non-breeding individuals in July-August. It generally breeds on islands, forming colonies that occupy steep rocky areas of islands and promontories, and builds nests in cavities and on ledges, laying an annual clutch of a single egg that is incubated by both parents. It feeds on fish, cephalopods and, to a lesser extent, crustaceans. It fishes in flight and is able to submerge underwater and dive.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in the open sea from port areas, especially the Port of Tarifa and “Isla de las Palomas”.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species is limited to a few sightings, generally in flocks during their migratory passages in search of food.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.17 RAZORBILL



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.

Common name: Razorbill
Spanish vernacular name(s): Alca
Scientific name: *Alca torda*
Type of habitat: Marine and coastal environments
Status: Migratory



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Morphologically similar to other alcids, it has an elongated body and legs in a set-back position. It has a relatively long tail and robust black beak furrowed by a thin white line.
- Black dorsal region and white ventral region, similar in both sexes, which varies according to age and time of year. It flies very close to the water surface, propelled by rapid wingbeats, often grouped in small flocks that move in single file.

**WINGSPAN**

63-68 cm.

HABITATS

During the summer period it settles to breed in coastal areas with abundant cliffs and rocky islets. It spends the winter on the high seas, sporadically approaching coasts, inlets and port areas.

BIOLOGY

They reproduce in colonies formed by a large number of individuals. They build their nests in crevices or hidden holes in cliffs or under rocky ledges, adding, at most, only a few pebbles. They lay one white, yellowish, brownish, reddish or greenish egg with brown specks or stripes, which is incubated by both adults for about 36 days. It feeds on fish that it spots and catches while diving, being able to reach great speed by propelling itself underwater with its legs and wings.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in the open sea from port areas, especially the Port of Tarifa and “Isla de las Palomas”.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay is relatively frequent during the winter. It is not difficult to spot these birds in the open sea from “Isla de las Palomas” (Pigeon Island) or within the fishing docks of Tarifa and Algeciras.



Photo: Juan José Villalba .



09.18 YELLOW-LEGGED GULL



Common name: Yellow-legged gull
Spanish vernacular name(s): Gaviota patiamarilla
Scientific name: *Larus michaellis*
Type of habitat: Marine and coastal environments
Status: Sedentary

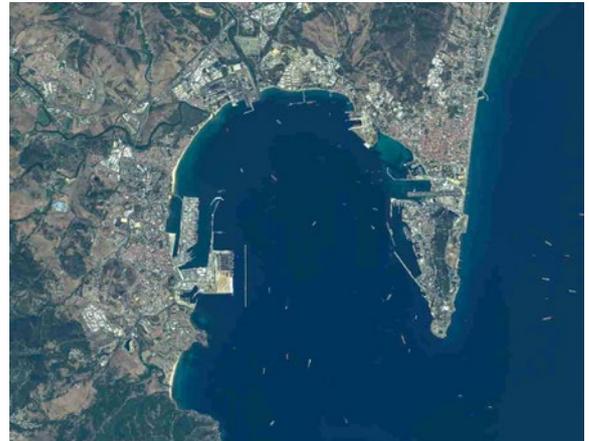


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Morphologically it bears a strong resemblance to the herring gull. In fact, until recently it was considered a subspecies of the latter.
- The most notable distinctive features of the yellow-legged gull include its yellow legs, yellow-orange beak with the more extended red tip and red eye ring. The dorsal area is greyish in colour, and the ventral region is white.

**WINGSPAN**

130-158 cm.

HABITATS

The yellow-legged gull is extremely adaptable when it comes to choosing a habitat. It lives mainly in coastal areas, occupying places ranging from cliffs or islets to urban centres, landfills, quarries and inland areas.

BIOLOGY

It reproduces in colonies. The breeding season of the yellow-legged gull begins in March and April. The gulls retire to breeding colonies where they build crude nests in depressions in the ground that they line with plant matter. The female lays 2-3 eggs, which she incubates for 25-33 days. Forty-five (45) days after hatching, the young birds become independent. They do not reach adult colouration until the fourth year.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

These birds can be seen mainly in coastal environments and towns, although, as mentioned previously, they are increasingly visible in inland areas.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is permanently present in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay. Specimens from this species occupy practically all APBA's port facilities in large numbers. However, they build nests and establish breeding colonies on "Isla Verde Exterior" and particularly "Isla de las Palomas" (Tarifa).





09.19 BLACK-HEADED GULL



Common name: Black-headed gull
Spanish vernacular name(s): Gaviota reidora
Scientific name: *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Type of habitat: Marine and coastal environments
Status: Resident

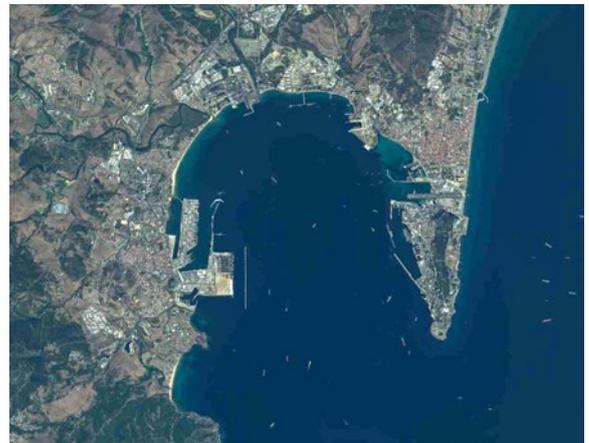


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Small gull with a characteristic chocolate brown hood on the head, excluding the nape, present only in breeding plumage. In adult specimens, this breeding plumage is white on the underparts, turning chocolate on the head, characterised by a distinctive incomplete white eye ring.
- Outside the breeding season, the adults lose the dark feathers on the hood, being reduced to a small spot in the ear area. It has a thin intense blackish red bill.

**WINGSPAN**

89-110 cm.

HABITATS

It lives mainly in coastal areas, especially around beaches and marshes, but it has also adapted to living inland, inhabiting fluvial and urban areas and even landfills.

BIOLOGY

It usually nests in colonies among vegetation in salt flats, marshes and lagoons, laying a single clutch of 2 to 3 eggs between April and July incubated by both parents. It feeds on fish, crustaceans and small terrestrial invertebrates that it complements with organic remains from urban waste.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

These birds are seen mainly in coastal environments and populations.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay is practically permanent. They are easy to spot in the fishing docks of Tarifa and Algeciras, on quays, pontoons and esplanades such as “Isla Verde Exterior” and/or Campamento.





09.20 CASPIAN TERN

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: Caspian tern
Spanish vernacular name(s): Pagaza, Charrán caspia
Scientific name: *Hydroprogne caspia*
Type of habitat: Coastal marine areas
Status: Migratory (scarce wintering)

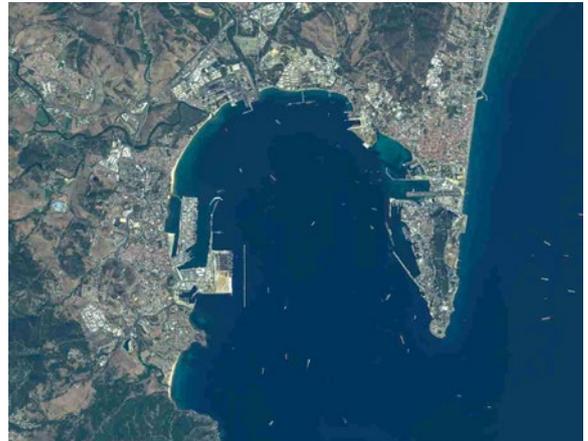


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- A large bird with a wide wingspan, it is the most corpulent and largest of the terns. Its plumage is light grey bordering on white with dark-coloured wingtips. Its most distinctive feature is its very long bill, which is intense red in adults and orange in juveniles (equal in length to the head).
- In the winter its head is covered by a black cap, the forehead turning whitish in colour during the summer. It has a short, slightly forked, inconspicuous tail with black legs.

**WINGSPAN**

135-140 cm.

HABITATS

It can be found along the coast, in bays, marshes, lagoons, estuaries and deltas, as well as large lakes, rivers and inland reservoirs.

BIOLOGY

Migratory passage species, regular but scarce. It nests in holes between rocks or in sand or gravel, laying one clutch containing 2 to 3 eggs that is incubated by both parents. They feed on small and medium-sized fish, the odd invertebrate, and may also eat the eggs and chicks of other birds.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in port areas in contact with the sea, particularly along the coastlines of beaches and rocks, such as Los Ladrillos beach and the entire area connecting the latter with La Concha beach.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species within the port is reduced to occasional stopovers to use the area as a resting place and for food during its migration.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.21 SANDWICH TERN



Common name: Sandwich tern
Spanish vernacular name(s): Golondrina del mar, gaviotín
Scientific name: *Thalasseus sandvicensis*
Type of habitat: Coastal marine areas
Status: Resident

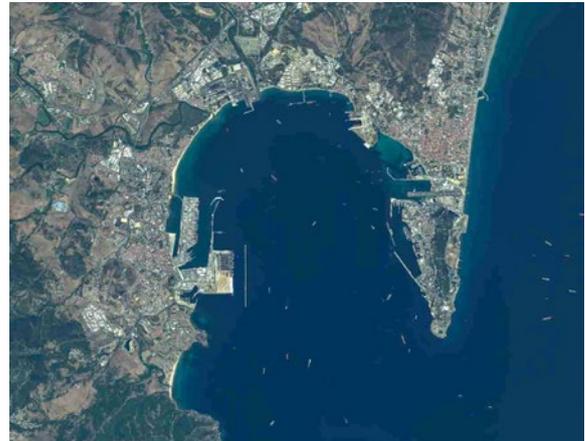


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Medium-large, slender bird with narrow and very pointed wings. Its tail is usually forked to a greater or lesser extent. During the summer, the upper half of the head is completely black, ending in a small crest on the nape.
- During winter, the forehead and crown turn white. It has a light grey mantle and white ventral area. It has black legs and a long, narrow black bill with a distinctive creamy-yellow tip (less noticeable in juveniles).

**WINGSPAN**

85–105 cm.

HABITATS

Abundant along the coast, on beaches, dunes, islets, and temperate estuaries, and even in coastal wetlands.

BIOLOGY

The breeding period of this tern runs from late April to early August. Colonies are especially dense, averaging between five and seven nests per square metre. It nests in a ground scrape, which it lines with some herbs. Clutches contain one or two eggs, rarely three, which are incubated by both adults for about 25 days. The average clutch consists of one or two eggs per year incubated by both adults, in dense colonies often in the company of other terns and/or gull species. They dive over the water to capture their prey, mostly small fish.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in port areas along the coastline, on beaches and rocks, such as Los Ladrillos beach and the entire area connecting this beach with La Concha beach, as well as on seawalls and breakwaters.

LIFE IN THE PORT

Frequently observed feeding in the Algeciras fishing dock, as well as in front of the East Dock of “Isla Verde Exterior”.





09.22 EURASIAN WHIMBREL



Common name: Eurasian whimbrel
Spanish vernacular name(s): Numenius phaeopus
Scientific name: *Hydroprogne caspia*
Type of habitat: Marine and coastal environments
Status: Wintering migratory bird



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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- The Eurasian whimbrel is a Charadriiformes bird of the Scolopacidae family. It is about 46 cm in size, weighs approximately 200-500 grammes and can live for approximately 15 years. It has a very long, (downward) curving beak, orange on the underside and pitch black on the upper part. Females have longer beaks than males. The plumage is generally very striped and barred brown, especially on the back.
- Lighter ventral plumage. Two dark lateral lines on the top of the head (cap) accentuate a more prominent eyebrow. It has long, bluish-grey legs. In flight, its light coloured rump (end of the back) contrasts with the rest of the body. It has a striped tail.

**WINGSPAN**

76 - 89 cm.

HABITATS

Nearshore wetlands, wet meadows, rocky shorelines and sandy beaches.

BIOLOGY

It is a wintering species in the province that can also be observed during their migrations. It breeds in northern Europe, in taiga (boreal forest) areas near the coast. It nests on the ground and lays one clutch of 3 to 4 eggs in mid-May. It feeds on crustaceans, molluscs and insects that it captures on coastal shores and rocks.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be seen in coastal areas, especially in the intertidal zone. It displays a preference for marsh areas.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species has a seasonal presence in the port facilities of Algeciras Bay, being seen mainly in winter. Although there is evidence of its presence in the port facilities of Algeciras, it can be seen more easily on, in particular, "Isla de las Palomas" (Tarifa) and the surrounding beaches.





09.23 LITTLE RINGED PLOVER



Common name: Little ringed plover
Spanish vernacular name(s): Chorlitejo chico
Scientific name: *Charadrius dubius*
Type of habitat: Wet and flooded areas
Status: Summer visitor (scarce resident)



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- Small bird measuring 15-18 cm in size with rapid flight and greyish-brown upperparts and white underparts. Distinctive features include its black pectoral band, supercilium and part of the crown.
- It has a short beak and greenish yellow legs. Nuptial adults have a bright yellow eye ring, which stands out against the intense black colour of the mask and neckband. The upper parts of the wings are smooth and dark.

**WINGSPAN**

34-36 cm.

HABITATS

This bird prefers open spaces with sparse vegetation, inhabiting inland waterways, rivers and lakes, boulder embankments and gravel pits, although it can also be seen on the coast and related sandbanks, mainly in winter and during the migration season.

BIOLOGY

It breeds around lakes, gravel pits and along rivers, nesting on ground comprising stony substrates such as boulders, gravel or pebbles. It lays 4 eggs that both parents incubate for 24 or 25 days. It hunts by alternating short runs with sudden stops to peck at its prey, and its diet includes small invertebrates such as insects and their larvae, small water beetles, and also arachnids and molluscs.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

The presence of this species in port facilities is reduced to a specific use. It can be seen running around the port facilities of Campamento, Rinconcillo beach and the “Isla Verde Exterior” esplanade.

LIFE IN THE PORT

A scarce bird [in the port area], but it can be seen almost all year round feeding in different places, with maximum arrivals during the pre-breeding migration period in late March and early April and during the post-breeding period in the first half of September.





09.24 BLACK-WINGED STILT



Common name: Black-winged stilt
Spanish vernacular name(s): Dominico
Scientific name: *Himantopus himantopus*
Type of habitat: Wetlands and coastal areas
Status: Common resident



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- Large wader with an unmistakable appearance, a slender and very elegant figure, elongated red legs and a long, thin and sharp bill.
- Its plumage is predominantly white, except for the wings, which are black. The back is black in males and dark brown in females. Dorsally the neck may have a variable amount of black depending on the individual.

**WINGSPAN**

67-83 cm.

HABITATS

This species is associated with all types of wetlands, with fresh or brackish water, both natural and artificial (associated with human activity), in coastal or inland areas, mainly marshes, lagoons, salt pans and rice paddies.

BIOLOGY

A very gregarious species, it forms large flocks, sometimes with other waders such as the avocet. This colonial or semi-colonial species is very territorial during the breeding season. It builds nests on the ground (although it can also make nests with mud and plant remains) and lays one annual clutch (sometimes two) containing an average of three or four eggs, incubated by both parents. It feeds by pecking or probing the surface, inserting its beak deep into the mud, in shallow flooded areas. Its diet consists mainly of flies from the Diptera order (especially larvae) and aquatic beetles. It may also capture hymenoptera, crustaceans or molluscs and even small invertebrates.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in open spaces in the port facilities with a certain tendency to flood and accumulate water in specific periods, notably the Campamento area, which fulfils these conditions, and the coastal area of "Isla de las Palomas".

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species is abundant in the described habitats, where it can be observed feeding.





09.25 SANDERLING

Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



Common name: Sanderling
Spanish vernacular name(s): Vernáculos
Scientific name: *Calidris alba*
Type of habitat: Coastal areas
Status: Wintering migratory bird



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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- Small wader with a rounded appearance and pale tones. In its winter plumage, when it is most often seen in the area, it has a grey back with a black shoulder and throat patch and very white underparts.
- Its short and straight beak is black in colour, like the legs. In flight it exhibits a wide white wing band with black border. The backs of juveniles are "spangled" black and white.

**WINGSPAN**

40-45 cm.

HABITATS

Frequent bird during the winter that can be seen along the entire coast, especially on sandy beaches. It maintains a marginal presence in salt flats, lagoons and similar environments close to the coast, as well as inland waters.

BIOLOGY

It can be seen constantly running on the beaches following the waves washing up and down the shore, feeding on small invertebrates washed up by the waves. Maximum arrivals take place in the first half of April and second half of September. It lays one annual clutch, nesting on slightly elevated and open ground, often on bare rock. Each clutch contains three to four eggs.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can normally be seen in coastal beach areas and related rocky intertidal zones. It can be seen frequently on “Isla de las Palomas”.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species maintains a frequent and visible presence, especially in winter, roaming and feeding mainly in the intertidal zone of “Isla de las Palomas”.



Photo: Antonio Benítez Paz.



09.26 RUDDY TURNSTONE



Common name: Ruddy turnstone
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Arenaria interpres*
Type of habitat: Coastal areas
Status: Wintering migratory bird



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Small (approx. 24 cm), plump wader with orange legs and a short, black, wedge-shaped bill. Plumage is orange-brown on the back and white in the ventral area. It has a white head with a pattern of black lines that extend mainly over the chest and to a lesser extent over the back.
- The black pattern may resemble a medallion or a large “x” on the chest. It is less visible in females. Winter plumage is duller, the back is greyish brown instead of orange, and dark head with grey spots.

**WINGSPAN**

43-49 cm.

HABITATS

Frequent bird during the winter that can be seen along the entire coast, especially on sandy beaches. It maintains a marginal presence in salt flats, lagoons and similar environments close to the coast, as well as inland waters.

BIOLOGY

It is a wintering species, breeding in northern Europe, in tundra wetlands. It nests on the ground and lays one clutch containing 4 eggs. It feeds mainly on molluscs, crustaceans and insects that it searches among the stones and pebbles, which it can pick up with its beak.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can normally be seen in coastal beach areas and related rocky intertidal zones.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species maintains a frequent and visible presence, especially in winter. It can be seen in the intertidal zone of "Isla de las Palomas" and in the Saladillo jetties.





09.27 COMMON SANDPIPER



Common name: Common sandpiper
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Actitis hypoleucos*
Type of habitat: Wetlands and coastal areas
Status: Resident

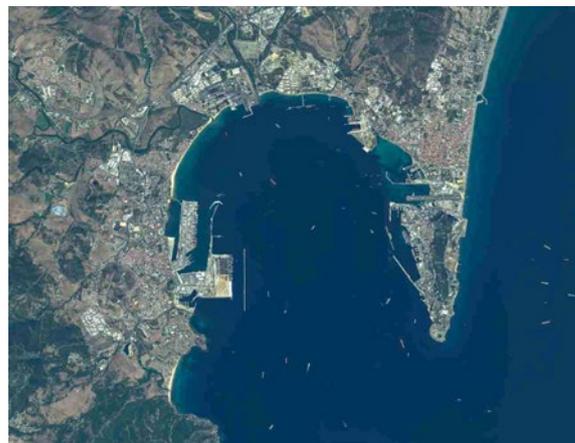


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- Small wader characterised by constant swaying of its posterior region, especially when landing. It has a stocky silhouette with short grey-green legs and a semi-crouched posture.
- It has a short neck, white eye ring, well-marked anterior eyebrow, dark greenish-brown back with a characteristic white notch rising up from the belly, between the neck and the wing, giving the white flanks a “wedge” appearance. The tail is longer than the wingtips. In flight it reveals a wide white wing stripe.

**WINGSPAN**

32-35 cm.

HABITATS

It occupies almost all aquatic habitats, both littoral (coastal) and continental (inland), although it prefers stony shores. During the winter it can be seen in intertidal flats, beaches, estuaries, marshes and different habitats associated with freshwater channels (e.g. rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, lagoons, ditches, canals, reservoirs). It can also be seen in anthropogenic habitats such as roadsides, urban gardens, ports, etc. It avoids open and overly exposed spaces.

BIOLOGY

It performs a very distinctive courtship ritual in May (zig-zag flights and rapid wing flapping over the water). It nests on the ground and on stony islets with little vegetation in well-maintained freshwater-related habitats where disturbances are minimal. It lays a single clutch of 4 eggs that both parents incubate. They feed by pecking or probing the mud, also hunting their prey on the fly, mostly insects (especially carabid and elaterid beetles) and other invertebrates such as worms and spiders. At certain times of the year, it consumes crustaceans, both isopods and amphipods, marine invertebrates and polychaete annelids.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be seen in sandy areas on the coastline associated with stony intertidal areas such as the strip surrounding the North access bridge and the coastline from Punta Rodeo to Punta de San García.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species can be seen mainly after the summer, roosting and feeding in areas such as Campamento and "Isla Verde Exterior".



Photo: Juan José Villalba.



09.28 EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE



Common name: Eurasian collared dove
Spanish vernacular name(s): Paloma de collar
Scientific name: *Streptopelia decaocto*
Type of habitat: Open areas
Status: Resident



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This medium-sized exotic bird is physically very similar to the European turtle-dove, although more slender and somewhat larger. It has distinctive uniform pale cream coloured plumage and an elongated tail with white tips and a black base.
- It has a thin black collar on the neck which extends along the flanks (a differential feature that does not appear in juveniles).

**WINGSPAN**

47-55 cm.

HABITATS

This species is associated with open, semi-steppe areas, with scattered wooded or shrubby formations. It has a preference for parks and gardens, urban environments and their surroundings, occupying groves in housing developments and crop fields.

BIOLOGY

It is a naturalised sedentary species that makes variable dispersive movements and forms winter colonies. It nests in trees and bushes, producing several annual clutches containing 1 to 2 eggs that are incubated by both parents. It has a granivorous diet (herb seeds, cereal crops and green parts of plants), complemented by invertebrates during the reproductive period.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be easily spotted in landscaped garden areas with frequent irrigation, within the port and near to buildings. It can occasionally be seen on esplanades with little vegetation and seasonal ponds.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This is a very common species that is easy to see throughout the year in practically any area of the port facilities.





09.29 ROCK PIGEON



Common name: Rock pigeon
Spanish vernacular name(s): Paloma
Scientific name: *Columba livia*
Type of habitat: Anthropized areas
Status: Resident



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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- Bird with bluish-grey plumage, darker on the head, neck and chest, which also have a green and purple iridescence. It is characterised by having two black bands and a white rump. The underwing coverts are whitish and the tips of the remiges are blackish. Its tail has a black band at the end, and the outer tail feathers are margined with white.
- The iris is orange, red or golden, and the thin bare ring around the eye is bluish-grey. The bill is blackish with a conspicuous whitish cere on its upper part, and its legs are purplish-red.
- Females are very similar to males, but the iridescence of their necks is less intense and more restricted to the rear and sides, and their chest is less voluminous and darker.

**WINGSPAN**

62-72 cm.

HABITATS

They occupy practically any type of habitat, from forests and countryside areas to completely urbanised areas. They sleep on cliff ledges, walls and other elevated structures. Rock pigeons are usually sedentary and rarely stray from their native region.

BIOLOGY

They usually form flocks. They are mainly granivores, feeding on seeds of cereals, legumes and other herbaceous plants, although they also feed on shoots, fruits, insects, worms and snails. Rock pigeons breed at any time of the year, although the peak reproductive period occurs in spring and summer. They nest on cliff ledges and similar surfaces of buildings, as well as inside cracks and gaps in similar locations. Their nests consist of a flimsy structure of grass and twigs, laid against a wall and usually under cover.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

They are relatively easy to see in urban environments. They prefer cliffs to sleep, although they move towards more open areas during the day to feed.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species maintains a frequent and visible presence all year round. Its presence is scarce on “Isla de las Palomas” (Tarifa) due to the huge population of yellow-legged gulls. They can also be seen in the Campamento area.





09.30 RED-NECKED NIGHTJAR



Source: APBA

Common name: Red-necked nightjar
Spanish vernacular name(s): Chotacabras, zamalla
Scientific name: *Caprimulgus ruficollis*
Type of habitat: Forest and agricultural areas
Status: Summer visitor



Photo: Port of Algeciras.

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- Bird with mimetic plumage. It has a rust-coloured collar around its throat and chest. The wings and tail are long and have small white ocelli on the tips (visible only in flight).
- Its flight is characterised by erratic movements over short distances.

**WINGSPAN**

52-59 cm.

HABITATS

It shows a preference for open areas with scattered tree and shrub vegetation and areas of bare soil. It can occupy a wide variety of habitats, from Mediterranean forest areas with scattered trees, pine tree covered slopes and fruit farms to pseudosteppes with little scrub or semi-desert areas. They generally occupy both areas with a high degree of protection and areas subject to intensive use and management.

BIOLOGY

It is a migratory species present only during the summer season. It does not build a nest but lays its eggs directly on the bare ground or covers them with dry leaves. It generally lays its eggs very close to small or medium-sized bushes or cultivated plants, although they can also be found next to trunks or fallen branches under a tree or among wood remains on sandbanks.

Clutches usually consist of two eggs and occasionally a single egg.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is abundant in forest and agricultural areas. It is not so common in urban areas. It can be spotted in the port facilities between late March and early April (prenuptial migration) and late September (post-nuptial migration). It is quite easy to see in abandoned esplanades and other open spaces.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in port facilities is limited to specific and even anecdotal uses. It is thought that it may use the port area to rest. In any case, its presence is limited to a few days during its migration.



Photo: Miguel González Perea.



09.31 EUROPEAN BEE-EATER



Photo: Sergio Mestre López.

Common name: European bee-eater
Spanish vernacular name(s): Abejaruco
Scientific name: *Merops apiaster*
Type of habitat: Agricultural areas
Status: Summer visitor



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- Very showy medium-sized bird (approx. 28 cm). Exotic colours, with reddish, yellow and green upperparts and greenish and bluish underparts. Yellow throat and black stripes in the shape of a mask over the eyes. There are hardly any differences between males and females, although females have a more greenish colour while males are browner.
- Red eyes and pointed silhouette in flight in wings, tail and head. Easy to identify when perched and making a characteristic call in flight that can be heard from great distances.

**WINGSPAN**

36-40 cm.

HABITATS

Present mainly in open terrain where it looks for cliffs, slopes and vertical sandy walls to dig its nests. Absent from forests and high mountains. It prefers areas of grassland and with bushes or scattered trees.

BIOLOGY

Migratory species present only during the summer season. The nests are galleries measuring 50-200 cm in length. It only lays eggs only once a year. It lays an average of six or seven eggs that are incubated by both the male and the female. The European bee-eater is an in-flight hunter of insects, especially bees and wasps but also dragonflies and flies, usually hunting in a group. It spends wintertime in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert.

WHERE YOU CAN SEE THEM?

Abundant bird and easy to see flying over the port facilities between late March and early April (pre-nuptial migration) and late September (post-nuptial migration). It is relatively easy to see perched on railings and fences and even on the ground in the Campamento port facilities, which is undoubtedly an attractive area as a resting place.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species only uses the port facilities occasionally as a resting area. Its presence is limited to a few days when migrating to and from the African continent.



Photo: Sergio Mestre López.



09.32 EURASIAN HOOPOE



Common name: Eurasian hoopoe
Spanish vernacular name(s): Bubilla, gallito marzo
Scientific name: *Upupa epops*
Type of habitat: Forest and open environments
Status: Summer visitor



Photo: "Isla de las Palomas" (Pigeon Island) and Port of Tarifa.

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| JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
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- Highly distinctive and unmistakable medium-sized bird (between 26 and 28 cm). Pinkish-ochre coloured upperparts and chest, a long, thin, slightly downcurved bill and characteristic black-tipped crest that it extends when excited or restless.
- There are hardly any differences between males and females, with some changes in the colouration of the breast feathers (and sometimes the wings). In flight, it is graceful and light with irregular flapping wingbeats, revealing a striking black and white pattern on the wings.

**WINGSPAN**

44-48 cm.

HABITATS

This hoopoe inhabits open spaces and requires trees to nest. It lives in not very dense forest areas, pastures and grasslands. It is also commonly seen in anthropised areas such as parks or gardens and areas with extensive livestock and agriculture. In winter they concentrate in more coastal and lower altitude areas due to their milder temperatures and in spring-summer they avoid areas with abundant rain.

BIOLOGY

The woodchat shrike is generally a migratory species. Nests are holes in small trees, the ground, roofs or walls and even cracks in rocks, provided these are of a suitable size, characterized by a foul smell due to the accumulation of faeces as a means of defence. It generally lays eggs only once a year, sometimes twice. It lays an average of between five and eight eggs, which are incubated and protected by the female. Its diet includes small invertebrates such as insects (crickets, caterpillars, ants, grasshoppers, chrysalises) and other smaller animals such as lizards or earthworms.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is easy to see in the port facilities with bare soil or low-growing herbaceous vegetation on relatively large flat areas, mainly in the facilities of Campamento and “Isla de las Palomas”.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in port areas is limited to specific uses such as resting and feeding.





09.33 WOODCHAT SHRIKE



Common name: Woodchat shrike
Spanish vernacular name(s): Alcaudón
Scientific name: *Lanius senator*
Type of habitat: Forest and open environments
Status: Summer visitor



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- Medium-sized bird (between 17 and 20 cm) with a very visible and unmistakable red/reddish-brown head. The belly and throat are white, the back is black, it has white stripes on the wings and a black mask covering the eyes. The tail is black with white edges.
- The beak is wide, short and hook-shaped, similar to that of a small raptor.

**WINGSPAN**

18-34 cm.

HABITATS

This is a common bird in open Mediterranean environments with scattered trees and bushes. Typically found in pastures, olive groves, thickets, farmlands and edges of cultivated fields.

BIOLOGY

The woodchat shrike is generally a migratory species. Average clutches contain five to six eggs, incubated and protected by the female, and a second clutch in the same year is common in case of high predation. Its diet includes small invertebrates such as insects (for example, crickets, beetles, ants, grasshoppers, caterpillars) and occasionally smaller reptiles such as lizards that it skewers on thorny bushes to make them easier to eat.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It is easy to see this bird in the port facilities mainly between the second half of April and the second half of August. It can usually be seen perched on wire fences, barriers, posts or high branches of bushes in the Campamento port facilities, which is a flat open area with a certain amount of shrubby vegetation more typical of its habitat.

LIFE IN THE PORT

It is relatively easy to see this species perched on wire fences, barriers, posts or high branches of bushes in the Campamento area, which is an flat open area with a certain amount of shrubby vegetation more typical of its habitat.





09.34 SARDINIAN WARBLER



Common name: Sardinian warbler
Spanish vernacular name(s): Cucamata, culimata
Scientific name: *Sylvia melanocephala*
Type of habitat: Open areas with scrubs
Status: Resident



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- Medium-sized bird (between 13 and 14 cm) with a distinctive black hood on the head that extends down below the eyes and the neck, contrasting with a whitish throat and a bright red eye-ring.
- The tail is also black, with white lateral edges. The back and wings are slate grey.

**WINGSPAN**

15-18 cm.

HABITATS

This bird is present in a wide variety of environments with more or less dense scrubland and dry and warm climates (thickets, mastic trees, wild olive trees or kermes oaks). It can also be found present in hedges, parks and gardens and shrubby undergrowth in pine and oak forests and pastures.

BIOLOGY

It is a sedentary bird, with maximum arrivals in the post-nuptial period (second half of September), mostly comprising young birds. It lays at least two annual clutches containing 3 to 6 eggs and builds well-concealed nests that are difficult to discover. Eggs are incubated by both females and males, although the female dedicates most time to this task. It feeds on arthropods, especially insects and their larvae (beetles, wasps, ants and bedbugs, to a lesser extent snails) and complements its diet in autumn with seeds and fleshy fruits.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is easy to see in the port facilities all year round, perched on wire and other fences or high branches of bushes in the Campamento port facilities, which is undoubtedly an attractive area due to its relatively abundant thickets.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is continuously present in the port facilities, especially in the areas covered with vegetation.





09.35 CRESTED LARK



Common name: Crested lark
Spanish vernacular name(s): Cogujá, cucujás
Scientific name: *Galerida cristata*
Type of habitat: Open areas
Status: Habitual resident



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- A small, squat, greyish-brown lark with darker stripes or streaks (varied plumage depending on its camouflage in the terrain). Its most distinctive feature is its long, pointed crest, also visible when folded over the back of its head.
- Another striking feature is its elongated beak, with the upper jaw slightly curved downwards and straight lower jaw.

**WINGSPAN**

34 cm.

HABITATS

This species is widely distributed and easy to see. It has terrestrial habits, occupies a wide variety of warm open environments such as roadsides, crop fields, meadows, stubble land, fallows and wastelands (in general, dry areas with little vegetation in anthropised environments). It can be found in tree crops and wooded areas.

BIOLOGY

It is a sedentary species with short-range movements. It nests on the ground and lays two or three clutches per year with an average of three or seven eggs, which are mainly incubated by the female. It feeds on wild seeds, cereal grains, the tips of tender grasses and small soil insects.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in many open and flat areas in the port facilities, with some associated small vegetation such as unpaved esplanades and port storage areas.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is frequently present and visible most of the year, roaming and feeding in areas such as Campamento and “Isla Verde Exterior”, although it can be seen in any landscaped area managed by APBA.





09.36 BLACK REDSTART



Photo: Female.

Common name: Black redstart
Spanish vernacular name(s): Carbonero
Scientific name: *Phoenicurus ochruros*
Type of habitat: Rocky areas
Status: Resident / Wintering bird



Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- A small thrush passerine with unusual colouration, dark in appearance, often adopting an upright posture and showing rapid tail flicking. Adult males are dark grey with a jet-black face and breast, revealing a white panel on the wing when perched.
- The tail is elongated and orange, with dark grey central feathers and black legs. Females have greyish-brownish upper and lower parts, like juveniles in their first year. It makes butterfly-like movements in flight, with rapid flapping of its wings.

**WINGSPAN**

24 cm.

HABITATS

A rock species, typically found in warm and sunny rocky areas, dry and stony terrain and rocky slopes. It also occupies urban areas, especially during the winter, as well as quarries, roofs and stone walls.

BIOLOGY

Maximum movements of this species occur in the first half of March and the second half of October. It can lay two eggs each year, nesting in a small cup of twigs and leaves, in hollows or ledges on cliffs, cornices or walls. Clutches consist of two to eight eggs that are incubated by the female. Its diet is based on the consumption of small and medium-sized invertebrates (insects and their larvae, spiders, etc.) and, to a lesser extent, seeds and berries.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can normally be seen perched on rocks or on buildings, more rarely in bushes and vegetation, easily visible on sea walls and breakwaters in the area sheltered from the sea, on piles of demolition waste and stockpiles within the port area, mainly in the port of Algeciras.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is frequently present throughout the year. It can be easily seen in the areas of Campamento, "Isla Verde Exterior" and "Isla de las Palomas".



Photo: Male.



09.37 NORTHERN WHEATEAR



Photo: Male.

Common name: Northern wheatear
Spanish vernacular name(s): Collalba
Scientific name: *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Type of habitat: Open areas
Status: Summer migrant

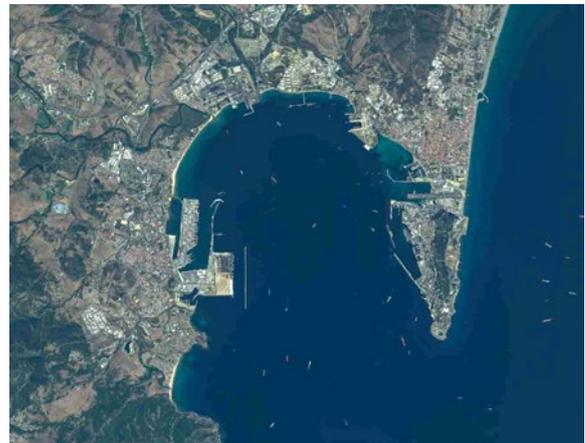


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This is a medium-size passerine bird with a robust structure and long tarsi. The male has a blueish-grey mantle and back, black wings and yellowish-ochre underparts. It has a grey crown with white superciliary stripe (“eyebrow”) and black mask. Females have more ochre-coloured upper parts, no mask and cream-coloured supercilium.
- In winter plumage the upperparts are browner in both males and females. Both males and females in flight show a distinctive rump and white tail with a black pattern in the shape of an inverted “T”.

**WINGSPAN**

26-32 cm.

HABITATS

This bird is present in high mountain grasslands and rocky areas without tree cover, with stones and rocks to nest on the ground. They typically inhabit open spaces rich in insects, in deforested environments: dunes, grasslands, low scrub areas, etc. During migration, it can be observed in almost any environment.

BIOLOGY

A highly terrestrial bird that likes to walk and jump on the ground, and also to perch upright on stones, rocks and other promontories of the terrain. Maximum pre-nuptial movements occur in the first fortnight of April, with two periods of maximum movement during post-nuptial migration: the first fortnight of September and the first fortnight of October. They can lay two eggs per year, nesting in a hole in the ground between stones or in a wall. Clutches contain two to nine eggs that are incubated by the female. Their diet is based on the consumption of insects, spiders, snails and other small invertebrates, which they complement with small fruits and seeds.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in the summer period, particularly in open farmland areas, clear of vegetation.

LIFE IN THE PORT

In the port facilities managed by APBA, it is very common to see this bird in the Campamento and esplanade areas of “Isla Verde Exterior”, although its presence on breakwaters and pontoons, as well as landscaped areas, is not uncommon.



Photo: Female.



09.38 SPOTLESS STARLING



Common name: Spotless starling
Spanish vernacular name(s): Tordo
Scientific name: *Sturnus unicolor*
Type of habitat: Forest areas
Status: Resident

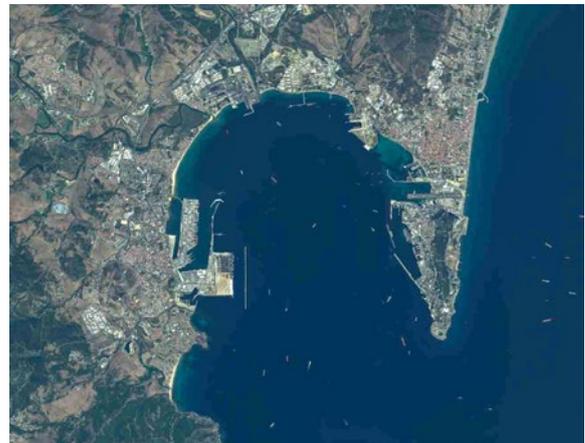


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- It has oily-looking jet black summer plumage with metallic tones and iridescent reflections. It has a compact appearance, with long, strong yellowish tarsi and a very short tail. The beak is pointed, yellow in summer and dark with a blueish-grey base in winter.
- Also in winter, females and juveniles (which are uniformly brown) have a finely mottled appearance, only visible up close, on the underparts and wings, but not on the mantle or crown.

**WINGSPAN**

38-42 cm.

HABITATS

It is present in different environments, showing a preference for areas with human presence. Forests, agricultural land, tree-lined crop fields, parks, gardens and urban centres.

BIOLOGY

It is basically a sedentary species, with local dispersive movements in winter, when it forms groups after breeding, moving to more anthropised areas (maximum presence in October). Between February and April it returns to its breeding areas (maximum presence in March). It is very gregarious throughout the year and nests in tree cavities, on rocky or sandy slopes and in buildings (e.g. walls, under tiles), laying up to two annual clutches containing two to nine eggs (usually four or five) that are incubated by the female. It feeds on a wide variety of invertebrates, including mainly ground-living larvae and beetles. It may occasionally capture small vertebrates. In autumn and winter, it also consumes fruits, from small berries to olives.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It is a relatively cosmopolitan bird. It can be seen in many different habitats, from farmland and countryside areas to gardens in large cities.

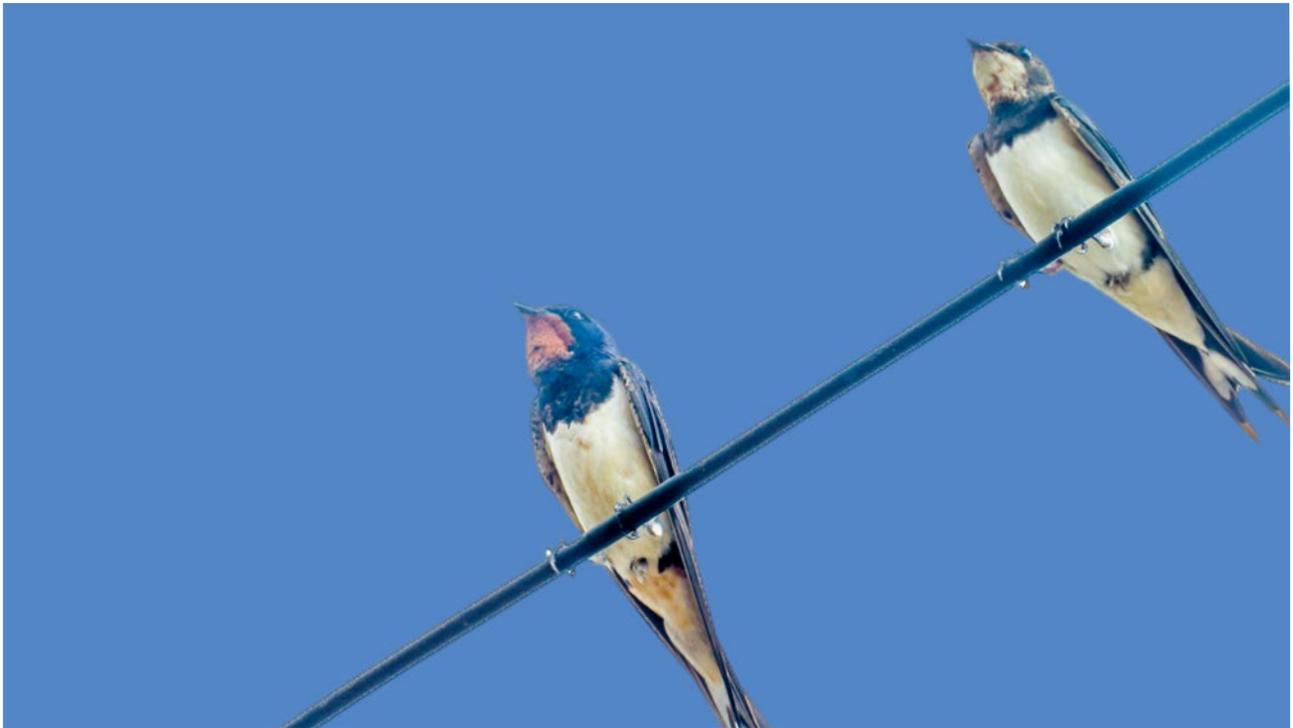
LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is frequently present in the port. These birds usually feed in the areas of Campamento, “Isla Verde Exterior” and “Isla de las Palomas”.





09.39 BARN SWALLOW



Common name: Barn swallow
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Hirundo rustica*
Type of habitat: Urban areas
Status: Summer visitor

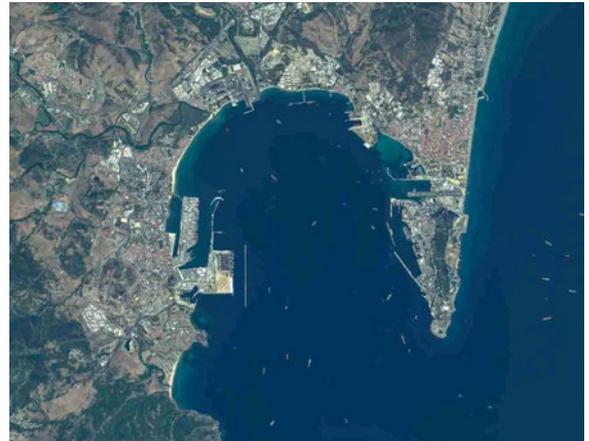


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This is a slender passerine bird, agile in flight, with very long wings and forked tail (much longer in males than in females or juveniles), black upperparts with metallic blue reflections and creamy white underparts, except for the throat, which is reddish (like the forehead) surrounded by a black collar.
- The ends of the tail feathers have white spots only visible in flight when it opens the tail.

**WINGSPAN**

30 cm.

HABITATS

It is an undemanding bird in terms of habitats, appearing in all types of environments. It is very common in rural and urban areas that are near water, notably meadows and crop fields.

BIOLOGY

It is widely distributed during the breeding season and on passage throughout the Peninsula, with maximum presence in the first half of March and the second half of September. It nests in solitary or dispersed colonies, preferably in rural buildings, but also in urban structures such as stables, porches, patios and terraces. It normally lays two clutches, sometimes three, with an average of 4 or 5 eggs. Its diet, which is insectivorous, varies according to the place and time of year. The most consumed prey are flies and mosquitoes (it also hunts flying ants, wasps, bedbugs and small beetles).

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is normally seen in urban areas. It nests on the cornices of buildings. It may leave the city for more open areas to feed.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is frequently present in the port, especially in spring and autumn. It is usually seen flying in dizzyingly fast movements through parts of the port.





09.40 EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH



Common name: European goldfinch
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Carduelis carduelis*
Type of habitat: Open and wooded areas
Status: Resident



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- An unmistakable passerine bird with striking colouration and a wingspan of around 20 cm. The head has three colours, with an intense red front part of the face (throat and forehead), black bridles, like the crown and nape, and white cheeks.
- It has a large, conical light-coloured bill with pointed end. Upperparts are brown, the wings are black with an intense yellow wing stripe, very visible even in flight. The underparts are white with brown flanks.
- It has a black tail with white spots on the feather tips and a pointed beak. Juveniles lack the tricolor pattern on the head during the first few months of life.

**WINGSPAN**

21-26 cm.

HABITATS

This bird is frequently found in a wide variety of habitats, showing a preference for warm areas with mild climates combining trees and open spaces. It is frequent in pastures and other open forests, river plains with grasslands, boundary areas, crop fields, olive groves, pastures, wastelands, parks and gardens. In winter it can be seen in fields, treeless cereal crop fields or other open areas, rich in thistles and herbaceous vegetation.

BIOLOGY

This partial migratory species is distributed in sedentary populations (moving nomadically on a regional scale) and migratory populations in the Peninsula. Its maximum presence occurs in the first half of April and the second half of October. It nests in the high branches of trees or bushes, laying two or three clutches a year, with four to six eggs that are incubated by the female while she is fed by the male. This is a granivorous bird, a specialist in extracting seeds from thistles and many other plants of the Compositae family. It also consumes flower buds and other seeds.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can normally be seen in forest areas, but also in undergrowth, agricultural land and the countryside. It is increasingly frequent in urban gardens and parks.

LIFE IN THE PORT

Being a resident bird, it can be observed throughout the year roaming and feeding in open areas and with some vegetation cover such as Campamento and "Isla Verde Exterior", as well as in the landscaped garden areas managed by APBA.





09.41 COMMON BLACKBIRD



Common name: Common blackbird
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Turdus merula*
Type of habitat: Forest, agricultural and urban areas
Status: Resident

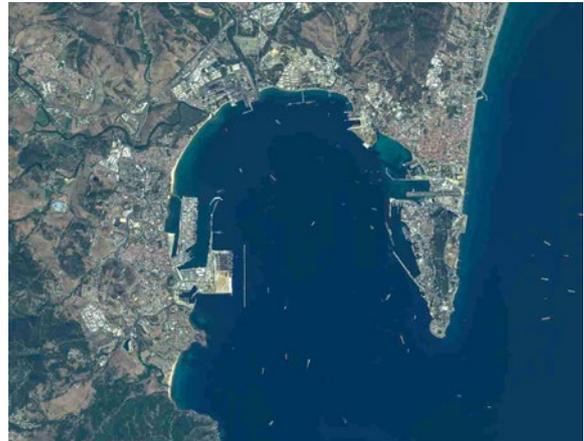


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This medium-size passerine bird has a wingspan of around 25 cm. The male has completely black plumage, a yellow-orange beak and an eye ring of the same colour. The female is very dark brown, usually with a mottled throat and a dark yellow or brown bill.
- The tail is long and black and the tarsi are long. It usually moves on the ground making small jumps. Juveniles are similar to females, with a dark bill and heavily mottled brown throat and breast.

**WINGSPAN**

25 cm.

HABITATS

This generalist species occupies a wide range of habitats, in fact almost any environment with arboreal vegetation (it avoids heavily deforested areas). It is present in all kinds of areas with forest cover, mosaic agricultural landscapes, olive groves, parks and gardens, as well as thickets, orchards and wetlands.

BIOLOGY

Local resident bird with juvenile dispersal in August and September. Its diet is extremely varied, practically omnivorous, comprising mainly earthworms and insects (especially beetles, moths and ants). It also consumes many fruits, according to their availability, from summer to late winter. The nest is built by the female, usually at a low height above the ground (in thickets, hedges, vines, ivy, low-altitude tree forks, trunk holes, slopes, etc.). It can lay up to three clutches, each with an average of three to five eggs that are incubated by the female on her own.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is normally seen in port areas associated with gardens and green spaces with planters, hedges, flower beds, etc.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species is frequently present and visible throughout the year, roaming and feeding in the landscaped garden areas managed by the APBA.





09.42 WHINCHAT



Common name: Whinchat
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Saxicola rubetra*
Type of habitat: Open areas
Status: Summer visitor



Photo: Campamento port facilities.

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- A small compact bird with brown and mottled black upperparts. Adult males have two distinctive white or cream-coloured lines on the head (one on the eyebrow and the other on the moustache), being more visible than in females, with orange or reddish throat, chest and ventral flanks, black cheeks and brown crown with black streaks. The tail is short and brown, with visible white markings on the sides (in both males and females) and with white markings on the coverts and folded wingtip in males.
- Females generally have a paler and less intense and contrasting colouration, but they do have a white supercilium or eyebrow (juveniles, in addition to the “eyebrow”, have a mottled chest with light-coloured under-feathers and speckled white upperparts).

**WINGSPAN**

21-24 cm.

HABITATS

This species inhabits open spaces with short herbaceous vegetation: grasslands, heaths or mosaic-like meadows, even bushy hedges or cultivated fields, although it can be seen in almost any environment except in dense forests. These habitats are often dotted with fences, wires or poles, which they use as perches.

BIOLOGY

The maximum movements of this trans-Saharan migrant species occur in the second half of April and the second half of September/first half of October. It lays one annual clutch (occasionally two), nesting on the ground, well hidden among the vegetation. Each clutch contains two to seven eggs that are incubated by the female. It feeds mainly on invertebrates (insects), although it also consumes spiders, snails, oligochaetes and isopods and, to a lesser extent, berries during the autumn.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird can be seen in the flat and open areas of the port where there is certain amount of herbaceous vegetation, next to rubbish dumps and stockpiles. On the esplanade of “Isla Verde Exterior” and in the Campamento area.

LIFE IN THE PORT

It can occasionally be seen in the Campamento area.





09.43 HOUSE SPARROW



Common name: House sparrow
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Passer domesticus*
Type of habitat: All environments
Status: Resident

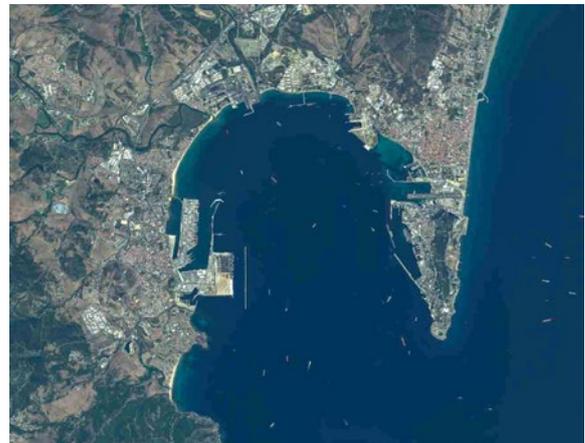


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This robust-looking bird generally has brownish-to-brown plumage with darker streaks on the back and greyish plumage in the ventral area. Males have a leaden grey crown, white cheeks, chestnut nape, with black bridles and bib.
- Females lack the chestnut colour, do not have a bib, have a brown crown, and have a broad yellowish-brown eyebrow that continues behind the eye. It has a well-developed conical bill (black in males and greyish in females) and a short, dark brown tail. Juveniles are very similar to the females.

**WINGSPAN**

22-23 cm.

HABITATS

It inhabits all kinds of anthropised environments, although it prefers rural or urban areas close to agricultural land and open areas. It can also be seen in large cities, but in lower density.

BIOLOGY

It is basically a sedentary species, although individuals can be seen crossing the Strait between the second half of September and the first half of November, with a maximum presence in mid-October. It nests in holes or cracks in all types of buildings, roofs, statues, lampposts and signs. Clutches consist of two to seven eggs, which are incubated by both parents (although less by the male), with two or three clutches per year. This bird is virtually omnivorous, albeit with basically granivorous preferences, feeding on all kinds of seeds, fruits and berries. It often includes food of animal origin in its diet, especially insects that it collects from the ground, on vegetation, or even in flight. In urban areas, its diet is based on food waste, fruits from the bushes in parks and gardens, pet food, etc.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

It can be seen in many parts of the port, mainly associated with buildings and nearby open spaces, as well as esplanades with sparse vegetation.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species in the area is constant at all stages of its biological cycle.





09.44 EUROPEAN STONECHAT



Photo: Female.

Common name: European stonechat
Spanish vernacular name(s): Cagarrope
Scientific name: *Saxicola rubicola*
Type of habitat: Forests and open areas
Status: Resident

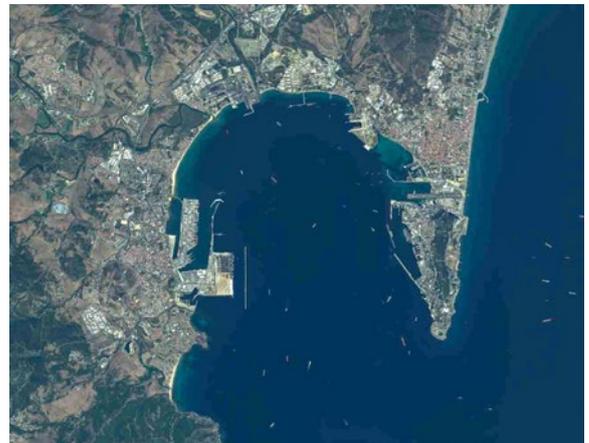


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This small passerine bird has a stocky appearance, with a rounded head, short wings and tail (the latter prominent), dark in colour, and white spots on the scapular area, very visible in flight.
- Males have a very showy appearance, a large black square head, and the white sides of the neck that contrast with the orange chest and white belly. The wings are black with white blotches on the coverts, the rump is white or pale cream in colour and the bill is short and thin, and the tarsi are also thin and long.
- Females have a similar pattern to males, although dorsally they are completely brown with blackish speckles (including the head). Juveniles are very similar to the females.

**WINGSPAN**

18-21 cm.

HABITATS

This species is typically found in the countryside and open areas, occupying scattered scrub formations, mosaic-type crop fields, grasslands with scattered shrubs, meadows and forest clearings. It prefers the boundaries and edges of crop fields.

BIOLOGY

It is a thrush that likes to perch on prominent places (on top of bushes, large stones or man-made structures from where it scans its surroundings). It is fast and direct in flight, with a strong wing beat. It nests on the ground, among vegetation, often under the cover of a bush. Each clutch contains two to six eggs (sometimes seven), laying up to two or even three clutches per year (incubated exclusively by the female). It consumes small and medium-sized invertebrates, mainly insects (Coleoptera, Hymenoptera and Orthoptera being the most important groups). Its diet may also include some seeds and fruits.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is normally seen in open areas of the port with a certain amount of sparse and scattered vegetation, such as the unpaved esplanades in both “Isla Verde Exterior” and the Campamento area.

LIFE IN THE PORT

This species has a regular presence practically all year round. It can be seen very frequently in the Campamento and “Isla Verde Exterior” areas.



Photo: Male.



09.45 WHITE WAGTAIL



Common name: White wagtail
Spanish vernacular name(s):
Scientific name: *Motacilla alba*
Type of habitat: Wetland and open areas
Status: Resident

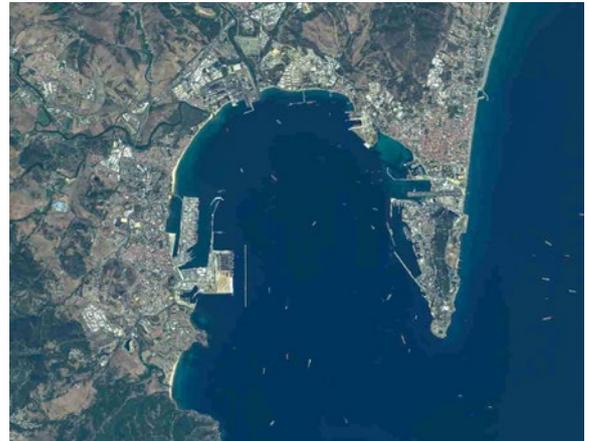


Photo: Algeciras Bay.

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- This elegant terrestrial bird has a very distinctive elongated appearance with a wingspan of 28 cm. The white colour of the head contrasts strongly with its black nape and black bib. The beak is short, thin and black, like the tarsi. The back is ash grey and the wings are black and white (white bands are visible when these are folded).
- It is noted for its constantly wagging tail, which is as long as the whole body and combines black and grey tones with white edges. Females have less black on the nape (it could be described as grey) and in juveniles the bib is almost completely grey.

**WINGSPAN**

28 cm.

HABITATS

It is present in different types of habitats, often under human influence such as parks, gardens, allotments and even urban areas. However, it prefers aquatic environments such as rivers, streams, wet grasslands, crop fields, coastal shores, riverbanks, reservoirs, lagoons and temporary pools.

BIOLOGY

A sedentary species, albeit with short and medium-range nomadic and altitudinal movements, reaching maximum post-nuptial levels in the second half of October and maximum prenuptial levels in the first half of February. In winter it becomes very gregarious and gathers in roosts in trees, often in urban areas, and in marshy vegetation. It feeds alone or in small groups and its diet consists of a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic insects, mainly consuming larvae and adult flies and mosquitoes. The nest is built by both parents in holes in river banks, rocks, bridges, buildings or walls. The female lays four to six eggs that are incubated by both parents. It can lay up to three clutches per year.

WHERE CAN THIS BIRD BE SEEN?

This bird is normally seen in port areas associated with humid environments, mainly in open esplanades with a certain amount of vegetation where temporary pools form, such as the esplanade on “Isla Verde Exterior” and the Campamento area.

LIFE IN THE PORT

The presence of this species is rather sporadic within the port facilities. It is mainly seen in winter, roaming and feeding in the described areas.





Rarities 10

As mentioned at the beginning of this guide, the area of the Strait of Gibraltar occupies a strategic location between two continents, representing the gateway to Europe from Africa, thus accounting for the presence in the area of a very high diversity of fauna. It is a unique location for watching endemic African species or others that are passing through on their way to their breeding or wintering places, depending on the season of observation.

In terms of the Spanish list of birds, it can be seen that approximately one quarter are rarities, the Strait being a privileged place for their observation and study. In fact, local recorded sightings of species such as the little swift (*Apus affinis*), Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*), long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*) or royal tern (*Sterna maxima*), account for the majority of sightings in Spain to date. There are also records of other species such as the lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*), house bunting (*Emberiza sahari*), Atlas wheatear (*Oenanthe o. seebohmi*), and common bulbul (*Pycnonotus barbatus*), which can be seen occasionally in the area. Obviously, there is a chance of spotting any of these species in the port areas managed by APBA. The likelihood of seeing one of these birds, coupled with the wide and diverse range of sedentary species and the increase in the number of birds during migration on their maritime passage through the Strait, makes the area described in this guide highly attractive, not only for budding birdwatchers but also for expert birders.

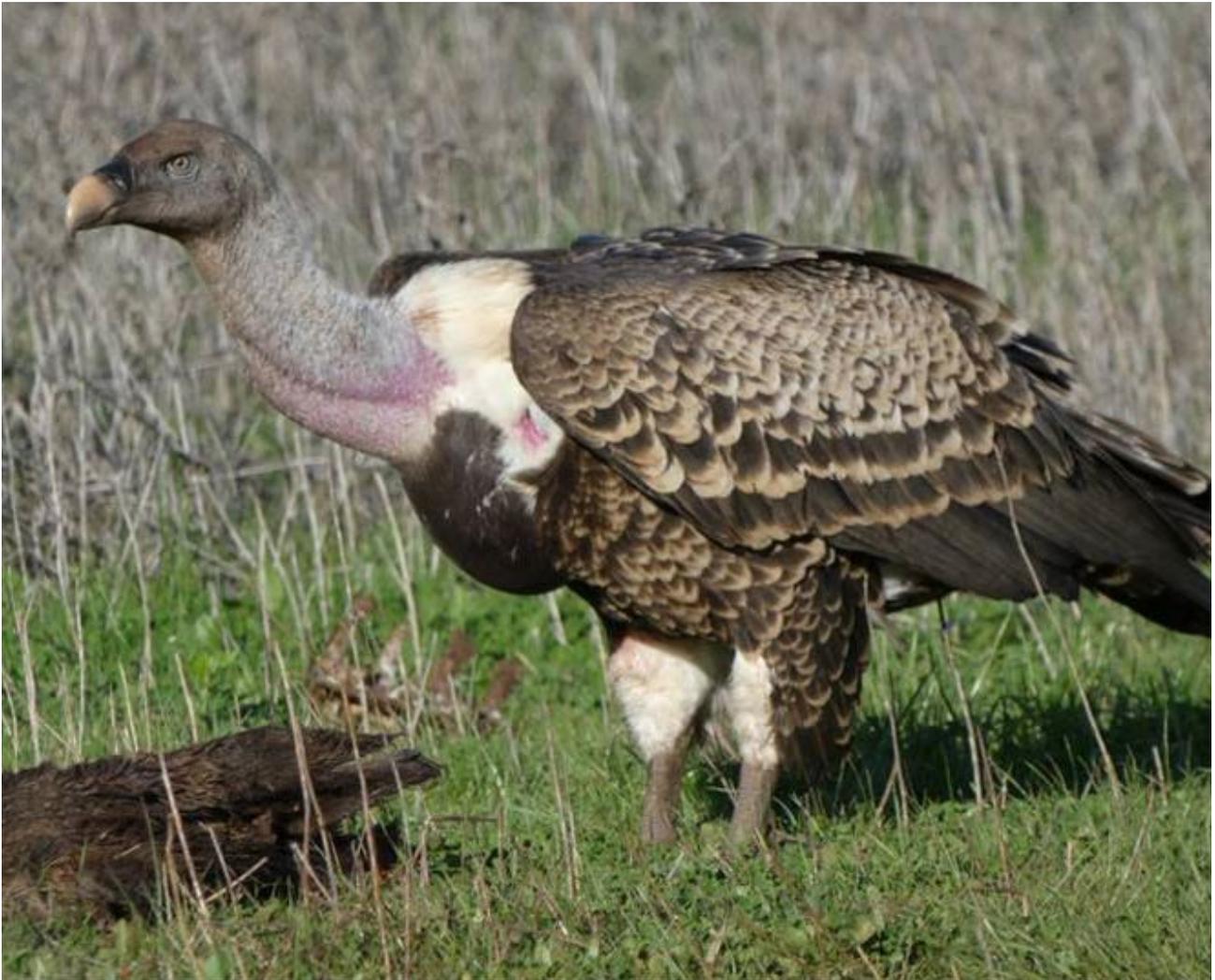


Photo: Rüppell's vulture; Photo: Rafael Sánchez Carrion.



Description of Rare Birds

Common bulbul (*Pycnonotus barbatus*);

Rather nondescript thrush-sized brown bird with a darker throat. The belly is pale and the undertail white (north part of range) or yellow (south part of range). It is widely distributed throughout Africa, present in many habitats, absent only from deserts. In Morocco it is a particularly abundant species in orchards, gardens, oases, etc. It maintains a continuous presence in Cádiz throughout December. The common bulbul has been seen in the Campo de Gibraltar area since 2013, when it was first verified that the species was breeding in mainland Spain. Currently only one specimen can be seen (Rodríguez-Esteban et al., 2020b and 2020c).

Little swift (*Apus affinis*);

Small (approximately 12 cm) dark flying bird with a broad tail that is straight when folded. The open tail has a rounded profile. This swift has a characteristically large white rump that extends to the sides. The chin is white and highly visible. Species widely distributed in the tropical and temperate parts of the Old World, although in Europe it only breeds in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. It is associated with human habitats and populations.

Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*);

Large bird of prey (approx. 95 cm) with a broad wingspan (approx. 250 cm), very similar to the griffon vulture, albeit somewhat smaller. Adults show clear edges of the dorsal feathers, giving them a distinctive scaly appearance. In flight, the presence of a white stripe under the wings and several rows of white spots can be seen. Juveniles lack the contrast in colour of the wing plumage. African species that normally inhabits grasslands, savannahs, and arid areas south of the Sahara. It shares habits and feeding areas with the griffon vulture during its stays in the peninsula.

Long-legged buzzard (*Buteo rufinus*);

This raptor is medium in both size (approx. 50 cm) and wingspan (approx. 125 cm). North African species very similar to the common buzzard, but with sandier plumage tones, especially on the head, a light-coloured chest, belly of variable, normally dark tones, and the presence of dark carpal spots (at the level of the carpal bone on the wingtips) on the underside of the wings. The tail is smooth and reddish. This species is typically found in Mauritania and Egypt, occasionally dispersed throughout the south of the peninsula. It prefers steppes and semi-deserts, but also uses cleared forests, boundary areas, pastures, crop fields and open countryside.

Royal tern (*Sterna maxima*);

A great tern, measuring 45-50 cm with a wingspan of 125-135 cm, bright orange bill and longer forked tail. The royal tern has pale grey upperparts and white underparts with dark wingtips. Its legs are black. In summer, adults have a black crested cap that extends backward. In winter the forehead and the front part of the crown turn white, leaving only the posterior crest black, slightly mottled in white, and an eye stripe. The plumage of juveniles is similar to that of adults in winter but with black spots on the wings. They breed on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the southern United States, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean islands, migrating south to winter in South America. The populations that breed in West Africa move both north and south of their breeding colonies, reaching as far north as Spain.

**Lanner falcon** (*Falco biarmicus*);

Females, which are larger than males, measure up to 50 centimetres, have a wingspan of 115 centimetres and weigh around 900 grammes. Males stay at 28 centimetres in size, have a wingspan of 90 cm and weigh approximately 600 grammes. The back of the adults is slate grey, while the underparts are whitish with reddish or black patches or spots. The head is reddish brown or whitish, with a conspicuous black moustache. It inhabits the rugged regions of areas with dry and hot climates, having even adapted to life in the desert. Its range of distribution includes southern Europe and practically all of Africa, between sea level and altitudes of up to 5,000 metres.

House bunting (*Emberiza sahari*);

Similar to the rock bunting due to its grey head and chest and reddish-brown body, but smaller, about 14 centimetres in length, with a wingspan of around 22–16 cm. It can be found in North Africa, from the Maghreb to Chad and sometimes Mauritania. In Spain there has been one official sighting in the far south of Andalusia, the only one on the European continent, corresponding to a male captured in June 1987 in the port of Algeciras.

Atlas Wheatear (*Oenanthe o. seebohmi*);

This bird is very similar to the grey wheatear. During the breeding season, the Atlas Wheatear is only distributed throughout north-western Africa, inhabiting high mountain areas of the Maghreb region (Southern Rf, Middle and High Atlas and Central Anti-Atlas), as well as north-eastern Algeria, wintering in western Africa, mainly south-western Mauritania and Senegal, western Mali and occasionally southern Morocco. There are very few recorded sightings of this species in continental Europe. It has been spotted in Gibraltar (April 2005).



Glossary of terms

11

Aquatic; Waterfowl are species of birds whose habitat is limited primarily to wetlands or water bodies. In general, this term applies only to birds that inhabit bodies of fresh or brackish water, including marshes, lagoons and other restricted coastal waters, while the term “seabird” is usually used to designate those that prefer the open sea.

Altricial; In zoology, altricial young are those born blind, with no open ear canals, virtually no hair or feathers, and very limited mobility. Their organism must mature after birth to develop the characteristics of an adult individual and they take a long time to learn. In contrast, when young are born already highly developed, they are called “precocial” species.

Anthropized; Anthropization is the transformation of the environment, either the biotope or biomass, by human activity. An animal that interacts permanently with humans can be anthropized from the point of view of its behaviour.

Bivalves; Bivalves (Bivalvia; bi: two, valvia: valve or plate), lamellibranchs (Lamellibranchia) or pelecypods (Pelecypoda) are living beings classified biologically in the phylum (type of organization) Mollusca (from mollusc). There are approximately 13,000 species of bivalve mollusks, most of them marine. They have a shell with two lateral valves, which are closed by the action of one or two adductor muscles. These are symmetrical, usually joined by a hinge and ligaments.

Scavenger; In zoology, a scavenger is an animal that consumes animal carcasses without having participated in their hunt. Scavengers are useful to the ecosystem by removing organic debris and contributing to its recycling. The remains left behind by scavengers are later used by decomposers.

Bristles; Fine, short hair of animals.

Hovering; Hovering flight is a system used by some birds to detect their potential prey. This movement requires a considerable amount of energy. The bird hovers in the air by vigorously flapping its wings back and forth, thus achieving elevation and staying in the same place in the air with no propulsion or forward motion.

Circling; Circling is a system used by some birds use to move. It usually consists of flying in circles without flapping the wings.

Colonies; These are permanent groups of birds. It is mainly seabirds that gather in this way. This habit has several advantages. For example, it is more difficult for predators to attack a larger number of animals than one bird or a pair that nests alone. Additionally, birds that form colonies are able to find better food sources.

Areas; Breeding or wintering areas are places visited by certain bird species during migratory processes.

Sexual dimorphism; This refers to the differences in physical appearance (size, shape, ornamentation and offensive and defensive organs), excluding the reproductive organs, between the two sexes of the same species.

Dispersion; Dispersion is the process that unites animal populations, playing a key role in their evolutionary dynamics and ecology. Most research on the dispersal of long-lived species has focused on its causes and on the signals used by individuals to establish themselves in a new location, both in natal and breeding dispersal contexts.

Hatching; Birth of a living organism after breaking the vessel (egg, cocoon, etc.) that contained it.



Endemism; The term “endemism” is used in biology to indicate that the distribution of a taxon is limited to a geographic area smaller than a continent and that it does not occur naturally in any other part of the world. Therefore, when a species is described as “endemic” to a certain region, it means that it can only be found naturally in that place. On the other hand, when a taxon is distributed throughout the planet, it is referred to as “cosmopolitan” distribution.

Wingspan; A bird’s wingspan is measured from the tip of the longest primary feather on one wing to that of the other.

Echinoderms; Echinoderms (Echinodermata, from the Greek words “ekhino” (spiny) and “derma” (skin) are a phylum of exclusively marine and benthic deuterostomous animals. Their name alludes to their exclusive internal skeleton made up of calcareous ossicles. They have secondary pentaradial symmetry, a unique case in the animal kingdom, and a characteristic aquiferous vascular system. There are currently approximately 7,000 such species.

Speciation; In biology, the process by which a population of a certain species gives rise to another or other species is called speciation. The speciation process has, over 3,800 million years, given rise to an enormous diversity of organisms, millions of species from all kingdoms, which have populated and still populate the Earth almost from the moment the first seas were formed.

Summer visitor/s; These are migratory birds that occupy an area during the breeding season, slightly earlier during their pre-breeding migration, and slightly after during post breeding dispersal and their post breeding migration. They leave during the winter.

Flysch; Flysch formations are rocky facies of sedimentary origin formed by the rhythmic alternation of cohesive hard rock layers (limestone, slate or sandstone) interspersed with softer friable layers (marl or shales). The term is a relatively old German term. It was coined even before the phenomenon it describes was studied in detail. It means “flowing”, “sliding down” or “slippery surface”.

Gastropods; Gastropods or univalves (Gastropoda, from the Greek words “gastér” (stomach) and “pous” (foot) constitute the largest class in the mollusk phylum. They have a cephalic area (head), a muscular ventral foot and a dorsal shell (which can shrink or even disappear in more evolved gastropods). Additionally, when they are larvae, they undergo torsion, which consists in the rotation of the visceral mass with respect to the foot and head. This allows them to hide their heads in their shells more quickly, giving them a clear evolutionary advantage. Gastropods include such popular species as marine and terrestrial snails and slugs, barnacles, abalones and sea hares, etc.

Gregarious; A gregarious individual is one that tends to live together with other conspecific organisms, forming herds, schools, colonies or, in the case of humans, social groups.

Hypogeal; Something that develops underground.

Winter; Winter or related to this season of the year.

Wintering, birds; These are birds that settle in resting areas during the winter, shortly before during post-generative dispersal (depending on the species) and post-nuptial migration and shortly after, during prenuptial migration. They move to another area to breed.

Waders; Waders are generally associated with wetlands, essentially coastal wetlands such as estuaries and lagoons. Many of these species are known for their long migrations, in some cases from the Arctic to the southernmost parts of the continents in the Southern Hemisphere.

Coast; The coast corresponds to the transition area between terrestrial and marine systems. Conceptually it is ecotone, an ecological border that is characterised by intense processes of exchange of matter and energy. They are very dynamic ecosystems, constantly evolving and changing.

Migration; Bird migration consists of the regular seasonal journeys made by many species of birds. In addition to migration, birds make other movements in response to changes in the availability of food, habitat or climate, which are usually irregular or only in one direction and receive various names such as



nomadism, invasions, dispersals or irruptions. Migration is marked by its annual seasonality. In contrast, non-migratory birds are called resident birds.

Mullets; Mulletts (Mugilidae) are a family of fish included in the Mugiliformes order, comprising both river and marine species, distributed in temperate and tropical seas, near the coast.

Feeding stations; Areas where animal carcasses are deposited to feed necrophagous birds. The assisted feeding of necrophagous birds by depositing carrion in feeding stations is one of the factors that has enabled the recovery and conservation of the populations of some of these species.

Neognaths; Neognaths (Neognathae; from the Greek for “new jaws”) are one of two superorders of birds within the subclass Neornithes. Neognathae includes virtually all living birds, except those belonging to its sister taxon (the other living superorder, Palaeognathae), which includes the tinamous and the flightless ratites (ostriches, emus, etc.).

Nesting; Construction of a nest that birds make to deposit their eggs or other animals for their young.

Webbed; When the toes are connected by a membrane.

Parents; The term comes from the Latin “prognere”, “to engender”, and refers to direct-line ancestors, i.e. the parents. The parents of an individual are those who give life to their offspring.

Riparians; A species that is born or grows or lives on the banks of water bodies: rivers, lakes, seas, dams.

Brackish waters; Brackish water has more dissolved salts than fresh water, but less than sea water. Technically, brackish water is considered to be water with between 0.5 and 30 grammes of salt per litre, more frequently expressed as 0.6 to 30 parts per thousand.

Sedentary, birds; In ornithology, a sedentary bird is a bird that does not make seasonal migrations. Birds that migrate are called migratory birds. In the case of some species, a favourable environment or food availability allows them to remain as sedentary species, until a specific atypical climatic situation or eventuality in food availability causes a semi-permanent change. For example, in very harsh winters with little access to food, birds migrate to warmer places and feed opportunistically.

Taxonomy; Science that studies the principles, methods and purposes of classification, generally scientific. It is applied in particular in biology to the hierarchical and systematic organisation of groups of animals and plants.

Therophytes; These are plants of which only the seeds survive during an unfavourable season. Therophytes are frequently found in desert and Mediterranean climates, with mild winters and dry summers, during which absolute vegetative dormancy may be an advantage. They are also frequent in ruderal environments (roadsides, suburban dumps, etc.), which are not very stable environments.

Tubinares; The former name of Procellariiformes, due to the existence of ducts in the beak such as the olfactory nostrils and a tube to secrete excess salt ingested when eating.

Trans-Saharan, migration; Migration across the Sahara to reach sub-Saharan Africa from the North African coast, Europe or the Levant.

The Old World; The term “Old World” is used in the West to refer to Africa, Asia, and Europe, collectively considered to be the part of the world known by its population before contact with the Americas, Antarctica, and Oceania (the “New World”).



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Photo: Juan José Villalba.